

EASTERN LIFE,

PRESENT AND PAST.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

“ Joyful to receive the impression thereof, as the eye joyeth to receive light ; and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things, and vicissitude of times, but raised also to find out and discern the ordinances and decrees, which throughout all these changes are infallibly observed.”—*Bacon. Advancement of Learning, I.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLVIII.

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.



CHAPTER XVI.

	PAGE
Thebes.—Tombs.—Mummies.—Medeenet Haboo.—Dayr-el-Bahree.—El-Karnac.	1

CHAPTER XVII.

Manufactures at Kenneh.—Manners of the crew.—Excursion to Abydus	22
--	----

CHAPTER XVIII.

Benee Hasan.—Masgoon.—Pyramids of Dashoor and Sakkára.—Memphis.—Mummy pits.—Consecration of brutes	34
--	----

CHAPTER XIX.

Visit to the Pyramids.—Ascent of the Great Pyramid.—Interior.—Traditions and History about the Pyramids.—The Sphinx.—Farewell to Ancient Egypt	62
--	----

CHAPTER XX.

Inundation of the Nile.—Famine in Egypt	89
---	----

CHAPTER XXI.

Cairo. Streets and bazaars.—Mosques.—Citadel.—Fête of the birth of the Prophet.—Entrance of the Mahhmil.—The Magician.—Society in Cairo.—Mr. Lane	116
---	-----

CHAPTER XXII.

	PAGE
The Hareem	147

CHAPTER XXIII.

Present condition of Egypt	168
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

Gardens at Roda and Shoobra.—Heliopolis.—Petrified Forest. —Tombs of the Memlook Kings.—The Nilometer.— Leaving Cairo	181
---	-----

PART II.

SINAI AND ITS FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

Moses before the Exodus.—Route to the Red Sea.—Camel- riding	199
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

Desert-travel.—The Red Sea.—Suez.—Landing in Arabia.— Wells of Moses	212
---	-----

CHAPTER III.

Journey to Sinai	229
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IV.

Convent of Mount Sinai.—Ascent of Djebel Mousa.—Ascent of Horeb	247
--	-----

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
Moses at Mount Sinai	263

CHAPTER VI.

From Sinai to Akaba	292
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VII.

From Akaba to Petra	310
-------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

THEBES.—TOMBS.—MUMMIES.—MEDEENET HABOO.—
DAYR EL BAHREE.—EL-KARNAC.

WE passed the working hours of several days among the tombs; and my journal has copious accounts of them: but, remembering how much sooner one wearies of reading of such places than of seeing them, I will say little about them.

One of the most celebrated is the Harpers' Tomb, first mentioned by Bruce, and therefore often called by his name. This is the work of two of the Ramases: and a vast work it is,—extending 405 feet into the hill. The entrance passages have small chambers on either hand, whose walls present us with capital pictures of ancient Egyptian life. The kitchen comes first,—on the left hand side: and there the servants are kneading bread, and carrying to the oven cakes sprinkled with black seeds: and others are making broth, and pastry; and some are drawing off liquor with a syphon; and others slaughtering cattle, and preparing the joints for the cook. Some of the beef is to be boiled,—the joints being put into cauldrons over the fire: and an assistant is pounding something in a mortar; and there is a meat-safe, suspended from the ceiling.—The other chambers have boats, furniture, arms, gardens and a

fish-pond ; fowls, fields and their produce ; and so forth. The standards are striking. They bear the hawk, the fox, the ibis, &c. The blade part of the arms is painted blue, which seems to show that they were of steel.—The furniture is so elegant,—the couches, fauteuils, hangings, vases, baskets and lamps,—that it could hardly be surpassed in Greece or Rome at any time, or in Paris and London now. It is very strange to look upon these evidences of in-door luxury, and then to turn to the pictures of savage warfare on the propyla of the palaces. And yet, it is only what one knows to be happening even now, within the limits of Christendom. No luxury on earth can exceed that of many houses in New York : and at this moment, while some ladies are passing their days in the midst of it, their husbands are shooting down the Mexicans with a hatred as cordial as any Ramases ever felt for his southern or eastern foes. And if we ourselves have not outgrown warfare, (and it is too soon to declare that we have), we may present the same humiliating spectacle to the antiquarians of a future age. Our warfare will not be so savage as that of these old heathens ; but it will be far more shameful, inasmuch as we call ourselves Christians.

Among the figures in this tomb are two harpers playing before the god Ao, or Hercules. They are clothed in white garments, striped with red : and their harps have each ten strings. Some preceding travellers have declared these harpers to be blind ; but there is now too much defacement about the heads to permit this to be seen.

The most striking device I observed in this tomb

(unless indeed it be the piggish soul returning to earth in charge of the monkeys) was one which related to the death of the occupant of the tomb. The funereal boat is drawn by men who are at a loss about passing the bridge before them. The steep, angular bridge intercepts the rope; but the scarabæus stoops to help. By its hind legs it hangs to the heaven; while, with its foreclaws it pulls up the rope, allowing the hearse to pass. In this position the scarabæus signifies the resurrection.

Each of the small apartments having a closed pit, Sir G. Wilkinson supposes* that each was the burial-place of that officer of the royal household whose function is illustrated on the walls:—as the cook, the armour-bearer, the gardener, &c. This appears very probable.

In the tomb of the Pharaoh who reigned (it is thought) in right of his wife Taosiri, there is a vaulted chamber in which we could only grope till our dragoman lighted a fire of straw. Its blaze showed us a most striking device, representing the king in his former and present state of being. In the upper hemisphere is the sun, and a living man. Then there is the scarabæus, head downwards, representing, as before, the resurrection or immortality which connects the two lives of earth and heaven. Beneath is the moon, above the funereal altar, where Isis attends with her protecting wings, and mourners are ranged,—the whole group being inclosed by a half-circle of human-headed birds.

The tomb of Osirei II. is remarkable for being in great part unfinished, though begun with great care

* Modern Egypt and Thebes, II. 209.

and pains. This condition is at once a proof and a consequence of the shortness of his reign. This tomb is remarkably clear and bright-looking ; but the figures become barer and barer as we proceed,—one sort of lines of illustration after another failing, till we come to blank walls. The sarcophagus chamber is quite rough and rude : but the sculptured figure of the king on the lid of the sarcophagus is fine,—being in relief to the height of nine inches.

The priests took care to preserve their grandeur and rank after death. Their tombs are found where the rock is of the most compact quality, fit to bear extensive excavations, while inferior people must find a place where there is more danger of the soil crumbling. We went as far as heat and bats would let us in a priestly tomb which occupies an acre and a quarter of the heart of the rock. The great man who occupied it left other tokens of his wealth ; but none could be more striking than this. There is an extraordinary array of niches, pillars and pits : but the covering of almost the whole of the walls with small hieroglyphic writing is the crowning wonder. Will no one go and read this great volume of Egyptian ecclesiastical history ?

The tomb of the Pharaoh who pursued the Hebrews to the Red Sea is extremely interesting. There are five lines of tribute-bearers,—black, red, light red, and yellow,—showing how extensive was his dominion. The people of “Pount” bring ivory, apes, leopards, and other tropical wealth. The next bring valuables of an ornamental kind which they declare to be “chosen offerings of the chiefs of the gentiles of Kufa.”* Next

* Wilkinson's *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II. 235.

come Ethiopians, "gentiles of the south," with African gifts of beasts, skins and gold. Then come the whites, —red-haired,—dressed in white garments with a blue border,—arms covered (Sir G. Wilkinson saw gloves, but I did not,) and bringing, among other offerings, a bear. These must be northern people, surely;—and at the time of the Exodus! Their wives follow with the other women who are collected in the rear; and they are dressed in long gowns which have three flounces. If our upholsterers might study in these tombs, so, it appears, might our dress-makers.

This is the tomb which exhibits to us the Egyptian trades, which it is so interesting to understand. When one looks at the brick-making, one thinks of the Hebrews who were just effecting their escape from that employment. I will abstain from details which may be found fully given elsewhere, mentioning only, as curious, the bellows, the inlaying or joining of wood of different colours with glue, the stone-cutting; and, above all, the carving of the Sphinx, and of two colossal statues, which some suppose to be the Vocal Statue, and the Karnac Colossus. The men are at work on stages, chipping away at the mighty monster, the Sphinx, which here looks as calm and cheerful as afterwards in its own person, among the sands. Such of these tombs as are simple tunnels are airy and lofty. The roof of this one rises towards the inner end,—no one knows why; for the effect is not good in any way. In the sporting tomb we see how the Egyptians excelled in the painting of animals. The animation of action here, and generally where brutes are presented, shows that the stiffness and monotony of their human images were from choice, and

not from incapacity for other methods. The animation of their warrior figures indeed shows the same thing.

We visited, of course, the tombs of the Queens, and explored two, as far as decay and the blackening of the walls would permit. The dominions of these ancient ladies were indicated by masses of red and yellow rock, with large black birds perched upon them. The complexions are somewhat strange and perplexing. The yellow prevails, it being the sign of feminine subjects; but we find pink and blue faces also. The blue is probably appropriated, as elsewhere, to individuals of the priestly caste. Emblematical animals abound here, and a row of apes, not bareheaded, was so astonishingly like a set of Christian judges as to send us into a fit of most profane laughter. These Queenly tombs are in a desolate mountain hollow, with rock towering overhead:—a fit place for hiding away the pomps and vanities of the world.

We much enjoyed exploring two recently opened tombs;—one discovered about five years ago; the other only a few months before; and by Lepsius. Of the first of these we thought highly,—not only from the good execution of the animals, and the fine effect of a phalanx of men, but because the faces of homage and supplication were admirably given. The colours were very gay, where not spoiled by smoke. The gayest of all was the tomb opened by Lepsius. No picture in this year's exhibition could be brighter. And the stucco was smooth, and the outlines clear as on the day when it was closed. The figures were all women, I believe, in flowing garments of white striped with red. As for the finish of the painting. I observed an ibis which,

while duly spirited as a whole, had every feather separately painted, in light grey outlines upon dark grey ground. This was more like a daguerreotype picture than any other work of art I ever saw.

After visiting so many repositories of the dead where every resource had been used to make them secure, and ample and sumptuous, it was strange to pass by spots where the common people of those old days were laid away. It was a doctrine of this ancient nation that all Egyptians were noble : and they applied this so far as to consider every one who was virtuous enough entitled to cross the dark water, and to be laid in the sacred soil of the death region ;—just as we declare that all men are equal in the presence of God,—that he has no respect of persons, and that in his field, the rich and poor lie down together. But as, with us, the rites of a pauper funeral differ from those of a princely one ; as in the United States, the dark-skinned children of God are laid apart from the whites, so here, in this metropolis of heathendom, did human weakness come in to mock the profession which human reason had made. Not far from the royal valley of death are pits,—hardly to be called catacombs, where undistinguished mummies were laid. One day, our attendants, always on the watch for treasure of one sort or another, saw something which induced them to poke and dig ; and next ensued the extraordinary sight of disinterring mummies. These bodies had probably been searched before, for valuables ; but they had been buried away with some care, and probably for a long time ; for it was no easy matter to disengage them from the soil. We partly unrolled two : and even ventured upon removing the bituminous mask

which covered the face, which came away, bearing the impression of not uncomely features.

While we were fingering the curly brown hair of one of these mummies, our dragoman coolly wrenched off the head, the throat giving way like a fold of rotten leather. I never remember so strange a sensation as in seeing this: but the thing was done before we could stop it.—People on the spot have no notion of reverence for these remains. Travellers who were at Thebes in 1827 tell us how all the fires wanted by themselves and their attendants were made of the sycamore wood of the mummy-cases. Abdallatif* tells us how, in his time (the 12th century) the country people stripped the mummies of whatever was of substance sufficient to make garments; and sold the rags of the mummy cloth to the paper-makers, to make paper for the use of the grocers. He speaks of some of the sycamore wood being then rotten; but some sound, and fit for use.—One extraordinary variety of burial he tells us of, on the word of one on whom he could rely. This friend of his was once searching for treasure with some companions, in the tombs at Geezeh, when they came upon a jar, carefully sealed. They opened it, found it contained honey, and began to eat. Presently, one of the party perceived a hair sticking to his finger. Drawing it out, he found it belonged to the body of an infant which was preserved in the honey. The body was in good condition, and adorned with jewels and rich ornaments.

What care to preserve the earthy frame! and with

* Abdallatif. *Relation de l' Egypte*, Livre I. Ch. IV.

what a result ! The three thousand years of purgatory of many of these Theban sleepers is now about expiring. If their faith was a true one, and they are now returning to resume their bodies, and begin a new cycle, in what a state will they find their sumptuous death-chambers, and their hundred-gated metropolis ! Their skulls, stained with bitumen, and indented with the creases of the bandages, are carried away ;—one to Russia, another to America ;—one is in a royal palace—another in a Mechanics' Museum :—their coffins are burnt to make an English lady's tea ; their cere-cloths are made into paper to wrap up an Arab's tobacco. The spices and unguents were taken from their brains and chests hundreds of years ago, to be melted down, and serve for some other perfuming and embalming.—These things may appear less grave and pathetic at home than on the spot : for mummies are little more respected in Europe than by the ignorant Arabs who pull them up and to pieces, for sale and use. Something is perhaps owing to the name ; and something to the dollish oddity of their appearance : but, in its proper place, there is great dignity about a mummy. Reposing in its recess or painted chamber, and bearing the marks of allegiance to Osiris, and of acceptance by him, there is something as solemn in its aspect as in that of any coffin in an English vault : and this solemnity is not lessened by the thought that in that still breast and sleeping head beat the heart, and wrought the ideas of three thousand years ago. This black pall of oblivion hanging over all gives one, though a mere stranger, something of the mourner feeling which is one of the privileges of the speculative, when bringing

speculation to bear on the obliterated past, instead of the unrevealed future.

We had an opportunity of seeing how different is the interment of the present inhabitants of the country from that of the old. Of old, seventy-two days intervened between the death and the burial. Here it was hardly more minutes. A woman in the village near our boat died at one o'clock ; and before five, we met the funeral procession. The howl here answers perhaps to the throwing dust on the head, that we see in the sculptures. Both appear painfully barbarous, as all strong outward expressions of grief must ever be.—We learned that, wood being scarce, there was no coffin ; but that the woman was buried in new clothes ; and that stones would be laid over the grave, so as to secure it perfectly.

On the 23rd, we went to Medecnet Haboo, including the great palace temple of Ramases III., and some older buildings, which I will deny myself the pleasure of dwelling on. I must speak presently of Karnac, which is still grander ; and I cannot hope that my readers can enter much into the feelings with which Egyptian travellers regard these vast monuments. I find in my journal this remark which here occurs :—“ it is difficult to assign the grounds of the knowledge one gains in these places of the people who lived in them : but it really amounts to much.” I must remember that it is difficult to assign the grounds of knowledge, and to convey the impressions received of the living and moving existence of these people, and not carry my readers through too many of those scenes which can be vivified only by the inhabiting spirit of

the spot. I will mention only two or three peculiarities of this pile of edifices.

On the wall of the Pavilion of Ramases, we see him among his attendant ladies. He is seated; they are standing. Some are offering flowers; others waving fans; and one is his partner at that game resembling draughts which is painted on older walls than these;—in the caves at Benec Hasan. There is a board with pieces resembling pins or pegs; and the lady's hand is on one which she is about to move.

In another place, we have the coronation; a very grand affair. The king is on his canopied throne or shrine, which is borne by twelve princes, his sons. A great procession follows, of princes, priests, soldiers, and various official personages. A scribe is reading from a scroll; the High-priest burns incense; and the band makes music.—Further on, the king presents offerings to his god; and the queen looks on from one side. Some of the priestly order bear the statues of the king's ancestors, and a crowd of standards. The hieroglyphic legends tell us that the king has put on the crown of the Upper and Lower countries: and birds are set free,—carrier-pigeons,—to convey the news to the gods of the north, south, east and west. This last was a pretty discovery of Champollion's. Then comes a long invocation, which is written on the wall, above the figure of the reading priest. The king has cut six ears of corn with a sickle; and these are offered to the god by a priest.—They had grand coronations in those days, it is clear.

The war-pictures are very spirited; and, in some respects, very barbarous. There are heaps of severed

hands, which the scribes are numbering and noting; each heap being marked 3000. On the outer walls are heaps of tongues, also numbered. We are told that the rows of captives contain one thousand in each line.—We have, on the outer walls, a naval conflict, for the first time,—supposed to have taken place on some Asiatic inland sea, as the enemy appear to be of Asiatic race. The Egyptian galleys are distinguished from those of the foe by a lion's head at the prow. One pretty scene in this foreign country is where the king is attacked by lions, which he kills and puts to flight,—in a marsh.—We have also besieged towns, where the children are lifted in over the ramparts, for safety, and the besiegers fell trees in the neighbouring woods. Then we have triumphs, captives, approving gods, &c., as in other places, but with much grandeur.—The predominant impression on one's mind here, as in so many other monumental areas in Egypt, is of the interest to us now of that early stage of the human mind which united with its barbaric aims and pursuits such serene and abstract conceptions of deity, and such a subordination of the present life to the future. Here we have the king and all human beings in intense action, in the Physical Force stage of civilisation, while the gods remain the same imperturbable abstractions that we ever find them; and the preparation of the tombs is an object of even more interest to men than the prosecution of their wars. It is curious, and very instructive to see how an age appropriated to the supremacy of Force was no less distinguished by Faith in abstractions.

When Thebes had so far declined as to become a

mere collection of villages in the plain, the Christians took possession of Medeenet Haboo, plastering over the sculptures with mud, putting up an altar at the east end of the temple, introducing their little red columns and low roofs among the massy and gorgeous pillars of the heathen courts; and even defacing the architraves to admit their rafters. Their priests took possession of the small apartments of the temple; and their people built mud houses within the precincts. On the approach of the Arabs, the Christians fled to Isna; and here lie their remains, scattered among the outstanding glories of an older time.—I have said how the Christian erections and paintings appeared to us. It may be interesting to know how they appeared to our predecessor in this journey,—the Bagdad physician who saw these places when the crusaders were warring with his faith in Syria. If we remember that he speaks of the Coptic Christians of between six and seven centuries ago, we shall not be apt to take offence, as at an attack on the Christianity of our country and our time. We do not pique ourselves on a fellowship with the Coptic Christians of the 12th century in their country settlements.

Abdallatif says, after extolling the grandeur and beauty of the Egyptian sculptures, “The children of Israel, having been witness of the homage which the Egyptians rendered to these idols, of the profound veneration which they entertained for them, and of the zeal with which they worshipped them, became accustomed, during their long abode among this nation, to see these superstitious ceremonies; and having found in Syria also people delivered over in

the same manner to the worship of idols, required of Moses that he should give them such gods as these people had : which drew forth from Moses this reproach, *You are a foolish nation*. The greater number of Christians, being either Egyptians or Sabeans, have retained the propensities belonging to their origin, and have suffered themselves to slide easily into the ancient habits of their forefathers :—in consequence, they have admitted images into their churches, and into the temples appropriated to the exercise of their worship. They have even pushed matters to an extreme : they have in many ways improved upon the existing abuses of this custom, and have carried their folly so far as to pretend to represent the god whom they adore surrounded by angels. All this was merely a remnant of the customs of their ancestors which had been preserved among them ; with this difference, however : that their ancestors, far from representing the deity under any form, had too exalted an idea of him to imagine that He could be apprehended by the sense, or comprehended by the understanding. That which has drawn the Christians into these excesses, and which has emboldened them to adopt such a custom, is the dogma which they profess of the divinity of a creature.—All this,” the sober Mohammedan goes on to say, “we have discussed with care in the treatise which we have composed against the Christians.”* — No enlightened person, of any faith, could help sympathising with Abdallatif while in sight of the profane daubs which the Christians have left among the

* Abdallatif. *Relation de l' Egypte*, Livre I. Ch. IV.

sculptures, and which seem put there to give every advantage to the old heathens. They have something of the effect of the ritual of the Greek church, which makes our most religious countrymen feel, in Asia Minor, that they had rather, in case of need, turn Mohammedan than enter it.

Near Medcenet Haboo is an expanse of sunk soil, with alluvial deposits round its edges, which Sir G. Wilkinson believes to have contained the Lake of the Dead, over which the body must be ferried to its tomb.*

Passing over the other edifices on the western bank, I will mention only that on the last day of our abode on this side, we visited the very old temple called Dayr el Bahree, or "the Northern Convent;" so called from its having been appropriated by the Christians for a church and monastery. It is gloriously situated; in the great central perpendicular rock;—excavated in the mountain itself; and once approached by an ascending dromos of great length, and between rows of sphinxes, with pylons and obelisks at intervals, and a succession of terraces at last. This temple is quite unlike any other; and few are more impressive. The crude brick arches of ancient date which are found in many places prove that the Egyptians were acquainted with the principle of the arch: yet here the vaulted chambers showed roofs composed of courses of stone, laid on flat, and hollowed into an arch afterwards. Some bits of walls and curious corners had been recently laid open to view,—their paintings as vivid as ever. On one wall,

* Wilkinson's *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II. 187.

from which the sand had been shovelled away, we found a splendid lotus plant, on which was a nest of water birds, bending the budded stem which supported it. A rabbit had attacked the young birds: a dog was attacking the rabbit, and an ibis the dog. On another part of the plant were a lizard and two yellow butterflies: and two human hands were plucking blossoms.

This was, as I said, our last day on the western shore. Our guides knew this; and I fancied that my open-faced and obliging donkey-boy felt sorry to part; as I truly did. There could be no exchange of sentiment, however; for the only language we had in common consisted of two words, which we found enough to signify our pleasure by, and that was all. "Bono" and "non bono" was our whole discourse. But my guide's face and close service on this last day seemed to say more. He understood my wish to go once more to the Ramaséum, and look about me when there;—to go once more to the Colossi, and ride round them once and again. He put my donkey to its best canter, that I might accomplish all this. I turned a grateful face upon him, and said "Bono:" and his answer was, with a wise nod, and holding out his hand, "La, la,—bono baksheesh!" He little knew how he had spoiled every thing by that one word,—what I might have given him, in cash and character, but for that act of begging at such a moment.

We crossed to the El-Uksur side in the dusk of the evening, and looked forward to spending the next two days in the most magnificent spot in Egypt,—among the ruins of El-Karnac.

The 25th was cloudy;—our first cloudy day in Africa. I was surprised to see how the whole landscape, and especially the ruins, suffered by the absence of light, shadow and vivid tint. It was very well to become aware of this; but one would rather it had happened elsewhere. We had planned to ride over in the evening, to see El-Karnac by moonlight; but in the evening, the whole sky was grey. We had not, all this day, one single gleam from sun or moon. We had made such a survey of the ruins, however, as prepared us for a thorough exploring the next day.

On the 26th, the sky was still dull when I looked out: but as I was taking my early walk on the shore, some lustrous gleams touched upon the points of the western mountains, and at length illumined the whole shore, and stole over the river towards us. Before breakfast, we visited first a stuffed crocodile which was offered for sale. It was a hideous creature; but I was glad to have an opportunity for a safe study of it. Then we went down to our old kandjia of the cataracts, which had just arrived with a cargo of slaves for Ibrahim Pasha's hareem. The girls looked as earnest and content as they always do while making cakes, Nubian fashion: but the officer who had charge of them and the boys carried a little whip.

After breakfast, we rode away to El-Karnac, the sun coming out, but the wind rising so as to cover us with dust, and render the examination of the external sculptures less easy than we could have wished.

The road from El-Uksur to El-Karnac once lay, as every body knows, between sphinxes, standing six feet apart, for a mile and a half. Those which remain,

headless, encumbered, and extending only a quarter of a mile, are still very imposing. Then come pylons, propyla, halls, obelisks, temples, groves of columns, and masses of ruins, oppressive to see, and much more to remember. I think I must say nothing about them. They must be sacred to the eyes that see them ; I mean, incapable of communication to any others. Those that have not seen El-Karnac know nearly as much as can be told when they remember that here are the largest buildings, and the most extensive ruins in the known world : and that the great hall is 329 feet by 170, and 85 feet high, containing 134 columns, the 12 central ones of which are 12 feet in diameter, and the others not much smaller ; the whole of this forest of columns being gay with colours, and studded with sculptures.—Of this hall the central roof is gone, and part of the lateral covering. The columns are falling, and at an accelerated rate. There is saltpetre in the stone ; and the occasional damps from the ground cause the corrosion of these mighty masses near the bases. They fall, one by one ; and these leaning wrecks, propped up by some accident which must give way, have a very mournful aspect. We cannot but look forward to the successive fall of these incomparable pillars, as to that of the trees of a forest undermined by springs. These will sink under a waste of sand, as those into the swamp, to be perhaps found again after thousands of years, and traced out curiously,—a fossil forest of the mind.

Nothing was more striking to us than the evidences of the earthquake, to which, and not only to Cambyzes and Ptolemy Lathyrus, we attribute the overthrow of gigantic columns in the area, colossal statues, and

mountainous masses of the propyla. If, perplexed by the magnitude of Egyptian achievement altogether, we give up the point whether means existed for the overthrow of such masses, there still remains the question how huge columns could fall straight, so as to be shattered in regular order, by any means but such a shaking of the earth as art cannot be conceived to produce.

One curious incident I must mention. A stone has fallen out, in more than one place, from the wall of the old Pharaonic propyla; and looking in at the holes, I saw sculptured and painted blocks, built into the interior;—remnants of a still earlier time, used as material. These propyla were standing before Moses was born. The great hall was built by Osirei, the occupant of the magnificent tomb I have described. But the original buildings of El-Karnac are of a date beyond our ken. The earliest portions now remaining are a hundred years older than any other edifices in Thebes.—I have before mentioned that the only known allusion to the Jews in the monuments of Egypt is on the walls of El-Karnac. The conqueror Sheshonk (Shishak) holds by the hair a group of captives, whose race is determined, not only by the face, but by the cities of Judah being named among the array of tributaries.

The finest view I obtained of the El-Karnac ruins was from a mound just above the lake. To the left lay the blue lake,—a sheet of still water, fed by the Nile through the soil, but too salt now for use. Remains of quays and baths made this look as ancient and forlorn as any other part. To the right lay the somewhat dreary plain which extends between the ruins and the

river. Before me, filling a circuit of a mile and a half, lay the ruins ; obelisks peeping over roofless temples ; statues seen through rows of columns ; pylons standing firm, like outposts, while within there is now nothing but wreck to guard : and all around, wherever we could look or set foot, were mute mourners over the desolations of time,—shattered inscriptions, defaced pictures, useless blocks, and unintelligible fragments.

The finest view I obtained from the ruins was from the top of the mound heaped up against the face of the propyla which front the river. Here I could command the plain of tufty coarse grass, strewn with stone, and varied with palm-clumps : and the remains of the avenue of smaller sphinxes, which used to extend to the landing-place on this side ; then the platform above the quay : then the river ; and beyond it the western plain, with its precipitous mountain boundary, now drest in rainbow hues. The temple at El-Kurneh was hidden by a palm-clump : but the Ramaséum, with its wrecked propyla, stood out distinct : and the recess of the Dayr el Bahree was traceable ; and the group at Medeenet Haboo : and, best of all, the Pair were sitting in the bright sunlight, above, because far beyond, the dark screen of palm groves which hid the modern village. This was my last view of them ; and in my parting yearning, I thought it the best. How inexplicable is the distinctness with which some images impress themselves upon the memorial faculty ! I did not see them more distinctly in that African sunshine than I see them now.

The finest impression, or the most memorable, which we obtained of El-Karnac was derived from our moon-

light visit, that last evening. There is no questioning of any style of art, if only massive, when its results are seen by moonlight. Then, spaces and distances become what the mind desiderates ; and drawbacks are lost in shade. Here, the mournful piles of fragments were turned into masses of shade ; and the barbaric colouring disappeared. Some capricious, but exquisite lights were let in through crevices in the roof and walls of the side chambers. Then, there were the falling columns and their shadows in the great hall, and the long vistas ending in ruins ; and the profound silence in this shadowy place, striking upon the heart. In the depth of this stillness, when no one moved or spoke, the shadow of an eagle on the wing above fell upon the moonlit aisle, and skimmed its whole length.

It was with heavy hearts, and little inclination to speak that we turned, on our way home, to take a last view of the pylons of Karnac. The moonlit plain lay, with the river in its midst, within the girdle of mountains. Here was enthroned the human intellect when humanity was elsewhere scarcely emerging from chaos. And how was it now ? That morning, I had seen the Governor of Thebes, crouching on his haunches on the filthy shore among the dung heaps, feeding himself with his fingers, among a circle of apish creatures like himself.

The next morning, I was glad we were off. I had had as much as, without more knowledge, I could well bear : and it was a delightful holiday to be sitting on deck, reading, and looking at shadoofs and mountains, and wheat and lupins, as we did a month ago.

CHAPTER XVII.

MANUFACTURES AT KENNEH.—MANNERS OF THE CREW.
—EXCURSION TO ABYDUS.

WE escaped the dreaded dining with the old consul at Kenneh. He invited us, when the gentlemen called for their letters; but they pleaded business. The old gentleman then begged our empty bottles of our dragoon, and was made quite happy by them. The cotton manufactory at Kenneh appeared to the gentlemen better than that at Isna, which certainly struck me as the poorest attempt at a manufacture I had ever seen. The machinery there was English, but kept in bad order. It was worked by horse power; and the horses were in poor plight. The thread produced was uneven, and the woven fabric therefore of indifferent quality, from so much of the machinery being worked by hand. One might say that this was as much as could be expected from a factory on the other side of Thebes: but then, what beautiful fabrics the old Thebans wore! and of their own manufacture. And what luxuries they brought into their homes, by exporting their woollen and cotton goods!—At this Kenneh factory, five hundred people were employed, at wages varying, according to their qualifications, from 100 piastres (1*l.*) per month, with food, to 50 and 30 piastres. The

machinery here was superior to that at Isna ; the thread more even ; and the woven fabric therefore better.

I have before mentioned the Kenneh pottery, and the wide demand for it. As much as possible is still done by hand. There is no mould for the inside. The jar is formed on the ancient potter's wheel ; and a piece of copper is used to give the external form, and to mark the outside with the curious scratches which adorn the Kenneh jars. Of course, it is a rare thing to see a jar which stands quite straight, or is not out of shape, one way or another. A man can make one hundred per day of the porous water bottles in common use.

There is a question among students of Egyptian history about some military passes ; and a consequent desire to know from those who have been up the Nile where the mountains approach the river so closely as to make it difficult for armies to pass. Of course, every thing must depend upon the season. But, at the season of our voyage, I should say there was no part of the shore where an army could not pass on the one side of the river or the other : and it cannot be conceived that any army, native or invading, could be in the valley without means of crossing the river, which with the inhabitants has always been such a matter of course as it is not seen to be anywhere else. At the high rock of Chenoboscion, and for some way on each side of it, there is only room for a narrow belt of tilled land, at low Nile ; but on the opposite shore is a plain of considerable width. Generally speaking, (I might almost say universally) when the hills approach on one side, they recede on the other ; and it is obvious that

this must have been the case through all the changes the Nile has certainly made in its course.

We were now about to bid farewell to the doum palm,—a tree which I liked in its place,—its stiffness and angularity rendering it curiously appropriate to the scenery in which it is found. A grove of it between us and the Dendara temple this day looked as well as any tall elms about a cathedral.

The crocodiles abounded now when we were soon to see no more. Some remained asleep on the banks even after the sun had gone down. Near Hou, Mr. E. saw nineteen at one time on the mud banks.

We witnessed more of the doings of the crew now that we were not absent on our temple-haunting all day long. The Buck did not improve in sobriety as time went on; and one morning about this date, he was insufferably noisy, in his elation at being dressed in a grand suit of new clothes;—brown burnoose, yellow slippers and a vast turban, white as muslin can be. On Mrs. Y. complaining of the noise, after the Rais and dragoman had used every kind of remonstrance, Alee quietly went up to him, as he stood in his grandeur by the gunwale, lifted him by the waist, and popped him overboard. We really feared that the weight of his clothes would have sunk him; but Alee knew better. In two minutes I saw him standing by the gunwale again, high and dry, but in his ordinary blue shirt and white skullcap.—One of our quiet Nubians, twenty-five years of age, had already two wives; and by what we heard of his life at home, he might well be content on board the boat. As Alee observed, a rich man may put his wives into different apartments;

but the poor man cannot: and the women quarrel fiercely and incessantly. This Nubian had to carry presents for his two wives after every voyage; and if they were not precisely alike, there was no end to the wrangling.—Alee called this permission to have more than one wife a very bad part of his religion. He was not yet married at all; and he did not intend to marry till he should have obtained money enough by his present employment to enable him to settle down in a home of his own. One of my friends one day expressed a hope that he would be careful in the choice of a wife;—so careful in assuring himself of her temper and goodness as not to be tempted to put her away, as husbands in Egypt do so lightly and cruelly. Alee did not quite promise this; but gave an account of what plan he should pursue, which shows how these matters are regarded by sensible young men in Egypt. He said he should buy a white wife, when he wanted to settle. He should tell her what he expected of her;—viz., to be good-tempered; to make him comfortable; and to take care of his “boys.” If she failed, he should, the first time, tell her his mind “very strongly.” And then, if she got out of temper, or was negligent a second time, he should “just put her away.” This was said with the gesture of Othello at the words “whistle her down the wind.”

The wag Ibraheem was seen to be very sulky to-day, after having passionately thrown some bread overboard, and spat out after it what was in his mouth. This was because the Rais rebuked him for his shabbiness in eating with the poor Nubians (the Cairenes having all by this time quarrelled) while laying by his own money

for his wife,—he having neither parents nor children to maintain. The way in which this was told to us showed that the maintaining of parents was regarded quite as a matter of course. It is to be feared that the parents' need of it is too much a matter of course, in the present state of that order of society in Egypt.

Of the temple of Dendara I will say nothing. The oldest names it bears are those of Cleopatra and her son Cæsarion ; and it has not therefore the interest of antiquity ; while its beauty is of the same kind as that of the Isna temple. At Dendara, as at Isna, the Pasha has caused the building to be cleared out ; for which the world is obliged to him : and it would have been more so, if he had not run a mud-brick wall directly up against the middle of the front ; so that no complete view of the portico can be had from any point. However, we must thankfully accept any conservative aid we can obtain, and hope to remove, in course of time, any blemishes as manageable as mud-brick walls.

On Saturday, January 23rd, we made an excursion of some importance :—to Abydus, which stood near, if not, as some scholars think, on the spot where This was built ;—This, the old capital of Upper Egypt, where sixteen kings reigned before Thebes was heard of. It will be observed that as we are coming down the river, we are ascending the stream of Time. Thebes, built chiefly by Monarchs of the Third Period, appeared very ancient when we were there. We are now (supposing Abydus to be the site of This) carried back to the First Period.—The only other ancient monuments now remaining for us to see were the Caves at Bence Hasan, whose dates are of the latter part of the First Period ;

and the Pyramids, and the cluster of remains about them; which are the very oldest of all, bearing date from the early part of the First Period. If we this day stood on the site of This, we were standing on the buried metropolis of powerful monarchs, who flourished here within a few centuries of the building of the Pyramids;—somewhere between four and five thousand years ago.

We left our boat at Beliane, and were to rejoin it in the evening at Girgeh, a few miles down the river. We rode for above two hours through a rich plain which bore crops of wheat, barley, lupins, vetches, lentils, a little flax, beans and sugar-cane. The barley was turning, in some places; and the beans were in blossom; and some beginning to pod. They grow tall, but are less strong in the stalk than with us. I had a good opportunity to-day of observing the supplies of water in the interior of the country. More than one curious point depends on whether the whole supply of water is derived from the river, or whether there are any springs whatever near the mountains. I should not have doubted the supply being wholly derived from the river, but from the decided declaration of one resident who certainly ought, from his function, to understand the matter. But his declaration that the interior of the country is watered partly by springs was contradicted by so many, — one of these being Linant Bey—as to convince me that it was mistaken. The ponds I saw,—this day in considerable number, seven miles from the river—are filled by filtration from the Nile. Linant Bey says that the water of the Nile filters through to any distance where water is found in

the valley. From another authority I learned that it penetrates to the Oasis. The ponds I saw to-day were of various depths, shapes and sizes. Some few had clear water in them; the shallower had a mere daub of mud at the bottom, while the sides were green with young wheat: and the deepest were half filled with a green puddle. A large number of men were employed in cleaning out the canal; and some of our party saw others employed upon a new one. The first thought of many, in reading about this filtration of Nile water, will be of the passage in Herodotus about the actual burial place of the king in the Great Pyramid. Speaking of the Second Pyramid, Herodotus says,* "It does not approach the magnitude of that of Cheops (I have measured them both); it has neither subterranean structures, nor canal to convey the waters of the Nile; whereas the other, where it is said the tomb of Cheops is placed, is in an island, and is surrounded by the waters of the Nile, which are conducted there by a canal constructed for the purpose." This version, which I translate from Larcher, intimates that the Pyramid itself stood in an island, and was surrounded by a canal. But another version of the passage gives a different impression. Sir G. Wilkinson offers the passage thus:—"It has neither underground chambers, nor any canal flowing into it from the Nile, like the other; where the tomb of its founder is placed in an island, surrounded by water."—In another passage, Herodotus tells us (II. 124) that Cheops made "the subterranean structures to serve him for a tomb, in an island formed by the waters of the Nile, which he introduced into it by a canal." There are some

* Herod. II. 127.

who, finding more and more "subterranean structures" the lower they go in the Great Pyramid, and of a very different kind of building from mere foundation,—that is, passages leading down and down again, so as to indicate some object lying deeper still, cannot but wonder whether there may not be a royal tomb at the bottom, with a moat of Nile water around it. What a discovery it would be! It must be observed, however, as Larcher points out, that Herodotus does not declare the king to be actually in the Pyramid, but only his destined tomb; while Diodorus relates that the kings who built these Pyramids were so odious to their subjects that neither of them was actually buried there. The people threatened to snatch the corpses from their graves, and tear them to pieces; so that the monarchs desired their families to inter them secretly in some unknown place.* We should like to know, some day, whether the penetrating Nile has been searching out, for all these thousands of years, the secrets of that great prison-house which has permitted access to no other visitor.

One of the most curious sights occurring in the course of an Egyptian country ride, like this of ours to-day, is of the little victories of the Nile over the Desert, in the outskirts of their battle-field. It is worth riding ten miles inland, if it were for nothing else, to see what the soil is where the fertile and barren tracts meet. In the cucumber and melon patches, I saw holes dug which showed a layer of from two to five inches of rich black soil deposited upon the most hopeless yellow sand. We all know that it is so. We all know how the Nile deposits its mud: but it is best

* Larcher's note to Herodotus, II. 127.

witnessed by seeing the crust thus sharply cut through, and perceiving how it lies unmixed upon the sand.

We passed villages, farms, and single dwellings to-day, with their dogs, geese, cattle and children. The camels removed it further from likeness to country scenes elsewhere than any other feature. We passed the village of Arábat el Matfoon (which means "the buried") and came out upon the site and ruins of Abydus,—a mighty place on its own account, whether it succeeded This or not.—The position, for a capital city, is very fine. I doubt whether the situation of Thebes itself is finer, except that there the Nile is nearer, and in full view ; whereas here it is merely traced by its evidences, unless the canals are full.—From the south-east to the north-west is an amphitheatre of rocks, guarding the plain from the sands of the Lybian Desert. In the middle of this barrier, due west from the temples, is an opening of great interest. It is the road to the Great Oasis. How many caravans and military processions have moved and glittered along that road from the city, disappearing in that defile of the hills ! From those precipitous rocks now descend sandy slopes, as far as the mounds which lie between the hills and the fertile plain. The temple and palace,—now the only coherent remains, are so far elevated as to afford a noble view of the wide area which they ruled. They rose above the city which now no doubt lies buried under these hilly sands. A very distant range of heights, faint and soft in colour, incloses the rest of the landscape ; and from them to the temples spreads the rich plain, all variegated with groves and belts of palm and acacia, among which the villages are hid. The airy space and

brightness of this scene are not to be conveyed by description.

The remaining temple and palace are mainly the work of Ramases the Great and his father Osirei. The temple is dedicated to Osiris, to whom indeed the whole area is sacred ; for this is one of the places where he was believed to have been buried ; and where the opulent families of the region all therefore desire to be buried too. This peculiarity, and that of the road to the Great Oasis beginning here, sufficiently account for the grandeur of Abydus, after it had parted with its primitive distinction of being, as This, the capital of Upper Egypt.—Meeting Ramases and his father here, we think differently of them from what we do at Thebes. Here, they are comparatively moderns, though living while the Hebrews were driving out the inhabitants of the Holy Land. Ramases and his father were as much younger than the monarchs on whose foundations they built as we are younger than Josephus and the conquering Titus who laid low the temple of Solomon. This temple contained the celebrated tablet,—the tablet of Abydus—on which was cut, by order of Ramases the Great, a list of names of the kings his predecessors. This tablet is now in the British Museum. As far as it goes, it most satisfactorily accords with the memorials on the temples and palaces, and with the names given on the walls of the Ramaséum at Thebes. But the beginning of the list is unhappily broken away ; and we thus lose the light we most wanted for the illustration of the earlier periods of Egyptian history.

Ramases lined one chamber of this temple throughout with alabaster.—The only part of this building which could be entered when we were there was the hall ;

and even there we could only creep about among the capitals of the pillars. We could not even count them. I made out that there were two in the width ; but I could not penetrate further than the seventh in length ; which made fourteen. An Arab, whom we sent in to count the rest, said there were twenty-six in all. If Ramases could have looked forward to the time when his temple would be explored in this way, how he would have mourned for his religion and for mankind ! The capitals of these pillars are so large, and the architraves so deep, that the hall, if cleared out, must be very lofty. I saw the cornices of two portals ; but there is no saying what lies behind them. Air and light are let in by holes in the roof.

The palace at hand is remarkable for its roof, which is of sandstone, while the walls are of limestone. The blocks which, laid together by their broadest face, form a roof of prodigious weight and solidity, are hollowed out into a vaulted form :—a laborious and primitive method of vaulting for people who certainly understood the principle of the arch. The sculptures on the walls are still clear ; and there are strong traces of colour. One superb boat caught my attention. The king, and the ape of Thoth, and some other small figures were in it ; and one extremity was ornamented with the ram's horns, while the other had two towers, crowned with the moon.

We walked on, about a quarter of a mile, over mounds of broken pottery and sand, to see such forlorn remains of these two great cities as lie above ground, to grieve and tantalise the eye. A limestone gateway, gaily painted, is partly disinterred ; and also the corner portion of some place once lined with alabaster, blocks and fragments of which are lying about. There is a

good deal of red granite,—some sculpture; and two blocks which appear to be the flanks of a pylon. There were some black stelæ and blocks; and plenty of crude brick.—This was all: but I would not, for much, have missed it. Such places are full of interest in any state;—for their monuments, if their monuments remain;—for their desolation, and the harvest of thoughts yielded by that barrenness, if the sand has spread itself over all.

We rode away from the begging Arabs of Arabat, and found a charming spot whereon to take our rest and luncheon. We passed that rare object,—a round, natural-looking pond of blue water, in a basin of the desert, with palms scattered about it: and then we came to a grove where the palms sprang up, straight and lofty, from an expanse of grass of the vivid green of our April turf.—There remained the ride to Girgeh, which occupied three hours and a half. It was all through the same rich plain which we had overlooked from the mounds of Abydos; and the fertility never failed, all the way, except where patches of the coarse grass called *halfel* lay here and there between the fields.—Girgeh looked fine as we approached it, with its tall minarets, its thick grove behind, and the range of mountains on the other side of the blue line of river. The rocks were red in the sunset, and the ghostly moon was stealing up behind them as we reached the shore. When the after-glow had died away, and the moon had assumed her glory, it was pleasant to sit watching the currents of the river in the trail of golden light she cast.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BENEE HASAN.—MASGOON.—PYRAMIDS OF DASHOOR
AND SAKKARA.—MEMPHIS.—MUMMY PITS.—CONSE-
CRATION OF BRUTES.

It is safe and easy now to visit the caves of Benec Hasan ; but it was dangerous or impossible a quarter of a century ago. The village now lies apparently roofless and ruined ; but it is still inhabited to a certain extent, and by people of good character. It was formerly a pirate village. When no boat on the river was safe from pillage in passing Benec Hasan, and murders became frequent, Ibraheem Pasha took the matter in hand. He brought his troops round the hills, surprised the place in the night, and shot almost every individual in it,—man, woman and child.

The village is seen from a ravine a little above the caves. From this point, the further view is of the rich valley and its winding river : but the near view is wild enough. Down this ravine trotted a very large fox, which, from its size, looked at first like a jackal. Some of the lower strata of the rocks are worn away, leaving the upper parts overhanging. Strange boulders are perched at intervals along the brink of the ravine, some being cut sheer through, like felled trees ; and those which were entire exactly resembling (and they

were all alike) large petrified sheep without their heads. Similar boulders stood at intervals on either side the great road, easily traceable from the front of the caves, which led up the steep, from the boats to the tombs.

Up this road came the funeral processions, to the caves which are opened in the strata of the rock. We must remember how very long ago this was. We must remember that Josephus, in his national vanity, desired to make out that the Hebrews were descended from the Shepherd Race of invaders, and falsified history for the purpose: and then, we must remember that some of these tombs were sealed up before the Shepherd Kings entered Egypt. As that hated host swept conquering by, and perhaps looked up at these rocks as they passed, some of these tombs were occupied and closed,—their walls being covered with the paintings which were before our eyes this day. The tombs I speak of bear date from the latter part of the First Period. They are the oldest known monuments in the country, except the Pyramids.

It is in one of these caves, however, that some people have fancied they have found a procession of Joseph's brethren. It may be natural for those who go from a Christian country, with little other antecedent interest in Egypt than its being the abode of Joseph and his descendants, to look for Hebrew personages on the monuments. But I think such travellers should take some little pains to reflect and observe before they say that they have found them. A very little observation would show that the Egyptians never put on their monuments any thing that they were ashamed of. There are no traces of the Shepherd Race. There are

certainly none of the Hebrews as a nation,—except where the cities of Judah and the captives of Jerusalem come in among the pictures of Sheshonk's conquests. There was no reason for celebrating them while they were neither enemies nor captives, but only the lowest working class in the country. Still less reason was there for representing the brethren of Joseph, who came as individuals or a family, and not as representatives of any nation, or even tribe. It is thus improbable beforehand that the Hebrews should appear on any early monuments.

In the next place, the procession here conjectured to have been one of Hebrew offerers, can be shown, I think, to be a very different set of people indeed. I will presently explain why.—But, further, if the discoveries of Lepsius and the conclusions of Bunsen are right, in relation to the dates of the Three great Periods of Egyptian history (and it would take much power and learning to overthrow them), this particular tomb was painted a thousand years before Joseph was born.—This tomb bears date in the reign of Osirtasen, who is now believed, on new evidence produced by Dr. Lepsius, to be the Sesortasen of the twelfth dynasty of the Monuments; the Sesonchosis of the same dynasty of Manetho. According to the same evidence, the Shepherd Kings came in in the middle of the thirteenth dynasty, remained 926 years, and were then driven out by the great Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty; under one of whom Moses led away the Hebrews. The Septuagint declares their residence in Egypt to have lasted 215 years: the Hebrew Chronology gives 430 years. Whichever be preferred, it is

clear that this tomb must have been shut up many hundred years before Joseph was born.

This tomb,—the twenty-ninth from the South, and second from the North,—has a vaulted portico, with two fluted pillars;—beautiful Doric pillars they would have been called, if erected many centuries later. Throughout its chambers, its basement is painted a deep red; and on this basement, and the architraves and everywhere, the hieroglyphics are green; the effect of which is extremely good.—The interior chamber contains the pedestal of a statue. Two longitudinal architraves divide the ceiling of this outer chamber into three portions, which are vaulted, and richly starred. There are three pits in this chamber; and there were four pillars; but they are gone.

It is in this painted chamber that the procession occurs which many have supposed, and all have striven to suppose, might be the arrival of Joseph's brethren. At each end of the row stands a great man. (There is no sitting figure, as some have reported.) The hieroglyphics show that neither of these great men can be Pharaoh or Joseph. The principal figure is named Nefothph; and his parents' names are also given. He is presented as governor of this district, on the east side of the Nile. He is no doubt the owner of the tomb.—The number of persons presented to the king by Joseph was five; and the number who had arrived were seventy: but here we have written up over the heads of the strangers the word "captives" and the number "thirty-seven." The complexions are of the yellow by which the Egyptians designated the whites; the tint of the men's faces being only a little deeper

than that of the women. The men wear beards, tunics, and sandals : the women have their hair long, and bound round the temples. They wear tunics ;—one at least with a very handsome Greek border, as we should call it if Greece had existed then ; and they are all shod in ancle-boots. Two children's heads emerge from ornamented panniers slung on an ass. The offerings brought are not like what the sons of Jacob would have to give. After a wild goat and gazelle, comes a handsome present of ostriches ;—quite a flock of them ; and the procession closes with a red man who carries an ibis.—Now, it is curious that no account that I have met with of this celebrated procession has mentioned the ostriches ; which are precisely the gift of the whole set which Joseph's brethren could not have brought. And there is no pretence that we could see for stopping short at the ostriches, which join on to the rest of the procession without any interval, and, with the man carrying the ibis, finish the subject.

What shall we say to this omission ? And what shall we say to a traveller (Mrs. Romer), who coolly reports, without any apparent shame, that she has brought away from Benec Hasan the head and shoulders of a figure which she does not doubt to be that of a Jewish captive ;—her dragoman having cleverly detached from the wall this interesting specimen of antiquity ! Where are our hopes for the monuments of Egypt, if passing travellers are to allow their servants, (who know no better), to commit thefts for them in such a way as this ? Who will undertake to say what may be the value of any one head and shoulders in a group which may be made unintelligible by its

absence! It is mournful enough to see what scientific antiquarians do;—how one saws through the middle of a tablet of inscriptions; and another knocks down one pillar of a series; and another carries away a group,—symbolical and necessary in its own place: but there really seems no hope left if desultory travellers are to pick and steal at their fancy from a repository where everything has its place, and is in its place.

I visited the whole thirty of these tombs; and found twenty-one which may be called commonplace; by which I mean that they contained the ordinary pits for the reception of bodies, a few niches, a few mock doorways,—which are frequently a form of tablet for inscriptions;—some with remains or traces of pillars; some with small inner chambers; many with slightly vaulted roofs, and usually an architrave to divide the vaulted from the plain part of the ceiling. Where the pillars are gone, the circular bases which are left are so smooth as to perplex one's thought as to what has been done to them:—as smooth as if some dexterous dragoon had sawn through the precious shaft, to indulge his employer with a new toy. The pillars which remain are often very beautiful. In the southern caves, they consist of the stems of four water plants, springing from a large, solid, circular base, and bound together below the capital, which is formed of four lobes of lotus buds.—The polygonal pillars which I have mentioned as being truly Doric have simply a lowly abacus between the shaft and the architrave.

The tombs throughout are not sculptured, except the hieroglyphic inscriptions, but painted on plaster. In many places the plaster seems to have been purposely

broken or scraped away,—so hard is the material, and so vivid the painting, in the corners that are left. This ruin was probably wrought by the Christians, who have elsewhere cut their crosses deep into the very figures on the walls.—Considering the early times, the colours here are various. I found a bright scarlet,—I think for the first time. The women are yellow skinned throughout. There are multitudes of pairs of wrestlers in what are called the military pictures; and these pairs are of a darker and lighter red, so as to show distinctly the intertwining of the lithe limbs. The birds, which are very various, rejoice throughout in a prodigiously gay plumage.

I will not indulge myself, and weary my readers, with going over the nine tombs which we found remarkable and full of interest. I will only just ask those who read to bear in mind the antiquity of these paintings, while I mention a few particulars of them.

We have here the art of writing as a familiar practice, in the scribes who are numbering the stores on every hand. There are ships which would look handsome in Southampton Water, any sunny day. There are glass-blowers who might be from Newcastle, but for their dress and complexion. There are flax-dressers, spinners, weavers,—and a production of cloth which an English manufacturer would study with interest. There are potters, painters, carpenters and statuaries. There is a doctor attending a patient; and a herdsman physicking cattle. The hunters employ arrows, spears and the lasso. The lasso is as evident as on the Pampas at this day.—There is the Nile full of fish, and a hippopotamus among the ooze. There is the bastinado for the men;

and the flogging of a seated woman. Nothing is more extraordinary than the gymnastics and other games of the women. Their various games of ball are excellent.—The great men are attended by dwarfs and buffoons, as in a much later age; and it is clear that bodily infirmity was treated with contempt;—deformed and decrepit personages appearing in the discharge of the meanest offices.—It was an age when this might be looked for; and when war would be the most prominent occupation, and wrestling the prevailing sport; and probably also the discipline of the soldiery: and when hunting, fishing and fowling would be very important pursuits. But then,—what a power of representation of these things is here! and what luxury coexisting with those early pursuits! Here are harpers with their harps of seven strings; and garments and boat-sails with elegant patterns and borders, where, by the way, angular and regular figures are pointedly preferred;—and the ladies' hair, disordered and flying about in their sports, has tails and tassels, very like what may have been seen in London drawing-rooms in no very remote times. The incident which most reminds one of the antiquity of these paintings is that the name of bird, beast, fish or artificer is written up over the object delineated. It is the resource,—not needed here, however, of the artist who wrote on his picture "this is the man,"—"this is the monkey." Another barbarism is the same that I have mentioned elsewhere;—that the great man, the occupant of the tomb, has his greatness signified by bigness, being a giant among middle-sized people.

We spent four hours in the diligent study of these tombs; and I ran over the note-worthy nine once

more, to keep them all distinct in my memory. The wind was so high that we could not leave the bank till after sunset; so we had excellent leisure for noting down on the spot what we had seen.

Our letters had lately told us of snow eighteen feet deep in Yorkshire; and at this date (4th of February) I find in my journal that our days were "like August days on Windermere." The thermometer stood at 74° in the shaded cabin in the middle of the day. It had been down to 40° , one cold morning, up the river: but I had never felt any degree of cold that was really uncomfortable; and rarely any heat that could be seriously complained of. The flies were troublesome for some hours in the middle of the day, so as to compel us to sit on deck instead of in the cabin; but they let us alone in the mornings and evenings, which were the only times when I, for one, cared to be in the cabin.

While we stopped at a village for milk, one afternoon, a man came down to us for medical advice. I used to think it one of the prettiest sights we saw when, on such occasions, Mr. E. examined the case with as much care as he would have given to a brother's, and Mr. Y. administered whatever aid could be given. Such offices cannot but abate Mohammedan prejudices against the Christians; and I trust all who go up the Nile endeavour to do their part, with prudence and earnest kindness. Without much quacking,—without danger of doing real harm,—some little relief may be given by simple medicines, and yet more perhaps by sending away the patient with hope in his heart. Any advice or medicine which he may obtain from English travellers is likely to be safer and better than what he will have

at home; and at any rate, he may be granted the cordial of sympathy and good-will.

The wind to-night was high; and it so jostled us against the bank as to destroy sleep. In the morning, we passed another foundered vessel, whose masts just showed themselves above the water.—The river was now less interesting to us than at any previous time. The crocodiles were absent; and the birds were scarcely more numerous than at home. The water had sunk so much, and the hills had so retreated, that the shores looked very flat. Yet we felt rather heavy at heart when we recognised objects,—as the False Pyramid to-day,—which told us that we were drawing near to Cairo. So far from being “bored to death with the Nile,” as we had been often threatened, we heartily enjoyed, to the last moment, our boat life, and felt really melancholy when packing up our books and papers for the Cairo hotel. We had still, however, two more days from the present date to spend on board.

On the evening of the 7th we walked on shore at Masgoon, where we stopped in order to visit, the next day, the Pyramids of Dashoor and Sakkára, and the remains of Memphis. When we had passed the village and groves, we saw in the desert such an array of pyramids as justifies Strabo’s description of them as being all along the brow of the hills.—The people here look comfortable, though their district is the property of Abbas Pasha, who is not noted for conducing to the comfort of humanity. This village and its lands are a present to him from his grandfather, the Pasha. He gives the people the land, seed, and irrigation, and takes half the produce. Such are the nominal terms, which,

in Egypt generally, are something widely different from the actual bargain. The palms here are very fine. The wool, which the people were spinning and reeling, was white;—the first white wool I remember to have seen. The distaffs were clumsy; but both men and women were as heartily busy as they could have been about better work.—The children were ludicrously afraid of us; and not even baksheesh could reconcile them. We were to them, no doubt, what the dreaded “black man” is to cottagers’ children in England. One little boy fled like the wind from the offer of a five para piece; and he could hardly be persuaded to take it from behind his mother’s skirts, where he sought refuge. A large quantity of mud bricks was here laid out to dry. They had an unusual proportion of straw in them; so that I believe they would have burned to ashes if set fire to.—This naturally brought to mind the brick-making of the Hebrews, who were from about this time never out of my mind till we reached Damascus. We were on their traces now; and afterwards all through our journeyings in Arabia and Palestine. All the next day I saw them in the plain of Memphis;—saw the remains of the heavy works in which they might have toiled; in the brick-fields, and in the cucumber and melon grounds which yielded the food they so longed for in the Desert. When I looked upon those fruitful plots, neatly fenced with millet stalks; and upon the bright verdure which spread like a carpet beneath the palms,—a carpet of the richest clover;—and upon the blue ponds inland, and the noble river flowing gently between its fertile banks, with family groups basking in the evening sun above the stream, or sitting in the chequered shade of the

acacia groves, I could understand the longing of the Hebrews for a return to Egypt on any terms. From the midst of such a desert as I had seen at Aswán, what is such a scene as this to the memory,—a sunset among palms, ponds, clover-fields, and acacia groves, near the adored Nile! Might not this contrast make any exile as heart-sick to think of as the image of any country under heaven,—unless, going from slavery, he was worthy of the freedom in store for him; which the Hebrews were not, and could not become on a sudden.

While we were on shore this evening, Mrs. Y., who had remained on board, was not without amusement. Our crew, always like children, went to child's play. By Mrs. Y.'s account, it was a capital scene. The Buck took office as Governor; was high and mighty, and had the tax-payers brought before him. There was no end to the bastinado and imprisonment he inflicted on unfortunate debtors, who told such tales of outrageous misfortune as were never heard before. Where our children play school, and naughtiness, and punishment, these men play tax-gathering, mishap, and bastinado.

When we were ready to start, on the morning of the 8th, there was much disputing between Alec and the donkey men: and the sheikh was called to give his opinion. The difficulty was that the men wanted the whole pay (seven piastres per donkey) in advance, which of course Alec was unwilling to give to strangers. He offered half in advance: and I believe it was settled so, at last. The men's plea was that a party of Europeans the day before had agreed to pay seven piastres per donkey; but had at last paid only four, alleging

discontent with the animals. I hope this was not true.

We crossed the rich plain, which was very lively from its being market-day. The assemblage of people was considerable ; most of them bringing something to market. The women carried loads like those of their husbands ;—baskets of charcoal, from the acacia-groves ; tow, wool, kids carried on the shoulder, &c. The women's faces were carelessly covered, or not at all ; and we were suddenly struck by the lighter shade of complexion here.

We came abruptly upon the Desert, near the two stone Pyramids of Dashoor. The first, which changes its angle half way up, is the ugliest building I ever saw, being at once clumsy and decrepit in appearance. I saw a wild cat run up the south-west angle, and hide itself among the stones ; and Mr. E. had just before seen a large fox. On every side but the north, the stones were rough and broken. One circumstance became thus apparent, which struck me as worth remembering,—the method of joining the blocks by locking them with a stone-key. A square hole on one side of each block being fitted to the corresponding hole of the other, makes an oblong square hole, of course : and an oblong square of stone fitting into it locks them together in one direction, as dovetailing would in two.—On the north side, though the surface was crusted, there was a smoothness and accurate joining of the stone, which showed what the face must once have been. The entrance is at the north ; and we saw the square hole ; but there is nothing within, it is understood, to tempt the passing traveller to enter,

while so near other pyramids which are worth all the time and effort he has to spare.—The best effect of these pyramids is when one looks up to the glorious sky above them, and sees how sharp and bright they stand out,—the yellow edifice glittering against the blue heaven.

The brick Pyramids of Dashoor are now crumbled down into mere ruin. Yet it is believed by some that the northernmost of these is the one which once bore the proud inscription recorded by Herodotus. The old Pharaoh, of the First Period, Asychis, who built that pyramid (whichever it may be) was prouder of his brick than of any stone edifice,—whether from its novelty, or from its having had a vaulted roof within,—(a trial of the arch, as Dr. Richardson suggests),—there is no saying now: but this is the account Herodotus gives of the matter. “This prince, wishing to surpass all the kings who had reigned in Egypt before him, left for a monument a pyramid of brick, with this inscription cut upon a stone: ‘Despise me not, in comparing me with the pyramids of stone. I am as much above them as Jupiter (Amun) is above the other gods: for I have been built of bricks made of the mud brought up from the bottom of the lake!’ This is the most memorable thing Asychis did.”*

From hence to Sakkára was a ride of about two miles across the Desert. We enjoyed the ride, being aided and braced by a cool wind from the south, which carried us along cheerily. From the first sand-ridge, we saw the white citadel of Cairo, standing finely on its rock, under the Mokuttam range. I was sorry to

* Herod. II. 136.

see it, and to receive its warning that our Nile voyage was just over.

At Sakkára, we found ourselves among the remains of the Necropolis. It was a mournful confusion of whitened skulls, deep pits, mummy rags, and mounds of sand.

It was here that Herodotus rose into his enthusiasm about the grandeur and wisdom of Egypt, and learned most that he knew of its history, and saw the mighty works which glorified the name and memory of Sesotris and other old Pharaohs. It was here that in a later day,—(two-thirds of the centuries which lie between Herodotus and us),—the learned physician of Bagdad saw what transported him with admiration and astonishment, though he complains with indignation of the mischief wrought by treasure-seekers, who were even parting the stones of the edifices for the sake of the copper used in joining them. He looked upon the place as ruined, and mourned over the disappearance of Memphis. What would he think of it now!—Seven centuries ago, Abdallatif wrote thus of the spot we were on to-day :

“ Let us now pass on to other traces of the ancient grandeur of Egypt. I am now speaking of the ruins of the old capital of this country, which was situated in the territory of Geezeh, a little above Fostat. This capital was Memphis: it was there that the Pharaohs resided; and this city was the seat of empire in Egypt. It is of this city that we are to understand the words of God in the Kurán, when he is speaking of Moses: *He entered into the city at the moment when the inhabitants were sinking into sleep: and again: Moses then went*

forth from the city, full of terror, and looking about him.

For Moses made his abode in a village of the territory of Geezeh, a little way from the capital; which village was called Dimouh. The Jews have a synagogue there at this day. The ruins of Memphis now occupy a space which is half-a-day's journey every way. This city was flourishing in the time of Abraham, Joseph and Moses, and a long time before them, and a long time after them." . . . "As for the idols which are found among these ruins, whether one considers their number or their prodigious magnitude, it is a thing beyond all description, and of which no idea can be conveyed; but there is a thing yet more worthy of admiration; and that is the precision of their forms, the justness of their proportions, and their resemblance to nature." And then this anatomist goes on to show what are the requisites to the perfect representation of the human frame, with its muscular niceties, and continues: "There are some of these statues which hold in their hands a kind of cylinder,—probably a roll of writing: and the artist has not forgotten to represent the folds and wrinkles which are formed in the skin of the hand when it is closed, towards the outer part by the little finger. The beauty of the face of these statues, and the perfect proportions which are observed there, are such as the most excellent art of men alone can effect, and the best that such a substance as stone can receive. There is nothing wanting but the flesh and the blood. The figure of the ear, its orifice, and its sinuosities, is given to perfection.—I have seen two lions placed opposite and near to each other: their aspect inspired terror. Notwithstanding

their colossal size, so far beyond nature, all the truth of form and proportion had been preserved. They have been broken, and covered with earth.”—“A man of good sense, seeing all these remains of antiquity, feels disposed to excuse that error of the vulgar which supposes that men of distant ages lived much longer than those of our times: that they were of gigantic stature: and that by means of a wand with which they struck the stones, the stones obeyed their will, and transported themselves wherever they were desired. We remain indeed in a sort of stupor when we consider how much of genius, of resolution and of patience, must have been united with a profound knowledge of geometry, to execute such works; what different instruments from any that we know of must have been employed; and what obstinate labour; and to what point these men have studied the structure of animals and of men.”*

These are some few particulars of what Abdallatif saw among these ruins of Memphis, which in his day occupied a space of half-a-day's journey. At the end of seven centuries, the aspect of the place is this. From the village of Mitrahenny (which now occupies the site) can be seen only palm woods, a blue pond, rushes, and a stretch of verdant ground, broken into hollows, where lie a single colossus, a single capital of a column, a half-buried statue of red granite, twelve feet high, and some fragments of granite strewn among the palms. This is all of the mighty Memphis!

The colossus is the celebrated Ramases' statue, given to the British Museum by Signor Caviglia and

* Relation de l' Egypte, Livre I. Ch. 4.

Mr. Sloane, but left in its grassy hollow on account of the expense. It is very beautiful. The serene and cheerful face is like that of the Colossi at Aboo-Simbil, but more beautiful. Each hand holds a scroll, with a cartouche at the end. There it lies, for the Nile to flow over it every year, and the grass to grow up round it when the waters have retired. It lies on its face: but by going down into the hollow, we could obtain a good view of the features, which are as sharp cut, and almost as delicately finished, as any of Chantrey's works at home. The upper part of the statue is somewhat corroded; but the under part retains its polish. If this statue is really the colossus which Herodotus speaks of as erected in front of the temple of Phthah, what a pity it is that further research is not made, and that glorious structure laid open to view from beneath the mounds! Herodotus says that that statue of Sesostris was accompanied by one of his wife, of similar proportions, and by four smaller ones of his sons.* But, if Lepsius is right in believing Sesostris to be a Pharaoh of the First Period, this is not the statue. At all events, there it lies in the mud; likely to be, as Sir G. Wilkinson observes burned for lime, any day, by the Turks.

The view which I obtained from a ridge in the Necropolis was truly dreary. It was at the colourless time of day,—noon: and there was no relief to the white expanse of waste but black and bristling palm tops in clumps, with a slight glimpse of the green beneath. The citadel of Cairo, white, on its white rock, was about a dozen miles off to the north-east; the white city stretching from it westwards,—a slender

* Herod. II. 110.

belt of black palms dividing it from the desert plain on which I stood. A range of white mounds near almost hid the alluvion, beyond which rose the white Arabian hills. All around, and filling up the whole scene to the west, stretched the glaring Desert, oppressing the sense. Yellow "sand ponds," as they are called in my journal, lay between the mounds. To the north-west stood the sharp-shadowed Pyramids of Geezeh; and nearer, those of Abooseer: and close at hand, that of Sakkára.

This Pyramid is built in degrees or terraces; the spaces between the gradations being very wide. Five of these degrees are clearly marked all round; a sixth was traceable by a bit of wall uncovered on the north side: and a deep well was at our feet, on that north side, wherein there is, as we were told, an entrance, probably opening upon a seventh terrace. The sand has hidden a large proportion of this Pyramid: but, making all allowance for that, we saw no great wonder, nor any beauty, thus far.

We next went to the mummy pits; and first into the underground world of ibises. There is no season of Egyptian travel in which one's sensations are more strange than in that spent in mummy pits. Here were underground chambers, pillared, painted, and sculptured, excavated into ornamented recesses, and consecrated to the gods; and destined for the burial of birds,—And then the cats! In a sort of quarry, lay strata of these bodies, the rags fluttering out, and the layers consisting of hosts of cats. The feline population of a whole continent for ages would be required, it seems, to fill these pits. The cats are swathed like

the human body; the ibises are inclosed in red pots, like chimney-pots, with the round end cemented on.

I am far from wondering at the feelings of contempt and disgust expressed by most travellers who visit these pits. I was conscious of some tendency to those feelings in myself: but I think it is necessary to remember here, as in all strange positions of the mind, that we ought to understand before we despise, and that, usually, the more we understand, the less we despise.—Of course, I do not, and never shall, pretend to explain, in any degree, the old Egyptian practices with regard to the consecration of animals: but two or three considerations occurred to me on the spot which appeared to be worth revolving.

The most obvious particular of old Egyptian thought and feeling,—that which presses upon the traveller's notice everywhere among the monuments, so as to compel him to a reiteration of the fact which must be excused in him, is the sacredness of Life, and therefore of Organisation. The evidences of this are sometimes such as our existing morality and taste forbid to be dwelt upon or described to any public, or to any large number who have not been there to witness the simplicity and the solemnity with which this subject is regarded and treated in the monuments: but my own impression is that there is as much work for the philosopher,—the religious philosopher,—in contemplating the ancient ideas of sacred things as for the antiquarian in interpreting the forms of their conveyance: and it may yet perhaps be found that the speculations of the most devout Christian and the most enlightened of the old heathens have the same root, and a development not so different as the superficial might suppose. It may be

seen, sooner or later, that in our reverence for Life, we underrate the facts of Organisation as much as the old Egyptians appear to us to have overrated them, in *their* reverence for Life. The Christian contempt for the body may be found to be an error as great and as mischievous as any heathen worship of it. It may appear that in considering the animal frame, so "fearfully and wonderfully made," as a carcase, a mere shell for the habitation of the principle of Life, to be despised and disparaged as a mere instrumentality of what we call Mind, we are as wrong as any old heathens could be in striving after a factitious immortality for it. For our contempt of the body,—for any species of asceticism,—we are, as far as I can see, without any warrant to be found in Christianity or in true philosophy. In our just reverence for the higher part of man's nature, his powers of thought and feeling, we may be found, at length, to have adopted a false supposition of facts, and to have striven after a separation not warranted by nature between those powers and the animal frame. Wherever this separation of treatment has been aimed at, wherever asceticism has been practised for the good of the soul, the object has failed; and precisely in proportion to men's contempt of the body has been the vitiation of the mind. The whole history of asceticism shows that the mental and moral powers of man sink, or become corrupted, when the bodily frame is treated with indignity and cruelty, quite as certainly as when the animal appetites are unreasonably and unnaturally indulged. And the thoughtful philosopher sees that it must be so. All that we really know is that we know nothing of absolute creation; that we have no evidence

of it, and can form no conception of it: that Life itself is an inexplicable fact to us; that we recognise it only through organisation: and that we have no right, and no power, to conceive of it as apart from organisation;—all our laborious attempts so to conceive of it terminating in imaginations of an organisation more subtle and refined than Nature has presented to our view. On such a subtle and refined organisation a considerable number of men have in all ages fixed their imagination, their hope and their belief: but they have never succeeded in showing any evidence for it, while, in wandering away from the facts of Nature, they have injured their own best powers, and failed of the highest attainments possible to their nature. The highest of human beings, the holiest, and the safest in any event, would be one whose bodily frame was of the highest order originally, the most fully exercised (which includes its being the most perfectly disciplined,) and whose functions of brain were therefore performed in the most perfect manner,—giving him the highest moral and intellectual elevation possible to humanity. In the reverence for Life which would rest upon such a being, the unsophisticated Christian and the devout old Egyptian would meet. Previous to such an encounter, the one might err in holding to his Platonic or Essene notions of a separate soul, clogged with a contemptible and obstructive body, and spurning the notion of its resurrection; and the other might err in regarding every animal frame as such a manifestation of deity as it would be profane to allow to decay: but in actually meeting with the highest example of existence ever offered to their notice, their common reverence for Life

would be gratified to such a degree as to enable each to mend his philosophy, and both to ascertain more carefully than hitherto the ground of fact on which alone true philosophy can be reared.—The Platonising Christians of our time might have sympathy with the ancient philosopher who pointed contemptuously to a dead body, with the words, “See the shell of the flown bird !” but the Corinthian readers of Paul’s Epistle would shrink from the saying, as the old Egyptians would ; the early Christians from their belief in Paul’s doctrine of the Resurrection ; and the heathens from their belief that whatever had been gifted with sentient life was for ever sacred.—And if it came to argument between the two, whether the line of sacredness was to be drawn between Man and Brute, it certainly appears to most people now that in reason the Egyptian would have the advantage.—Remembering that the Egyptians grounded their belief in the immortality of life on the constitution of living beings,—on the mystery of their existence at all in the absence of any evidence of absolute creation, we must see that they could not draw a line of separation between any classes of beings who had sentient life. Any exclusion of brutes from the reverence entertained towards Life, and from its quality of immortality, is grounded solely on the plea of a divine revelation that Man shall either not die, or shall live again ; and there are not a few devout receivers of this revelation who have refused to exclude brute animals from the condition of immortality :—not a few Christian philosophers who have shrunk from declaring that beings which enjoy the intellectual and moral powers of the dog, for instance, shall be annihilated at death

while Man survives. Such men as some of these are not treated with ridicule or contumely on account of this speculation : and they could hardly treat with ridicule or contumely the Egyptians who in their reverence for the mystery of Life,—the ultimate fact in nature to us all,—treated with serious care its sole manifestation to them and to us,—the organisation of sentient beings.

If the Egyptians ventured upon a step further back than the fact of Life, and assumed it to be a divine particle flowing forth from a self-existent and sole eternal Being, to flow back into its centre on the death of the body, it is clear that no line could be drawn between the human being and the brute, as to the reverence in which the sentient frame was to be held.—It is true, the Egyptians worshipped no human beings ; and they did pay religious observance to some brutes. They called their monarchs and great men “ gods,” explaining that by this they meant to dignify men whom the gods favoured with intercourse and special protection : but they paid no reverential honours to them, as they did to brutes. This seems to have arisen from their reverence for Instinct ; which does truly answer to the original idea of inspiration ; and is so acknowledged among all such primitive people as those who hold madness and idiotcy sacred. The original idea of inspiration is, exercise of mind without consciousness. Thus, the highest order of genius is with us the nearest approach to inspiration ; and among primitive and inexperienced nations, it is the unconscious and involuntary action from ideas which is seen in the idiot Highland child, or the lost Indian Fakeer, or the half-knavish, half-foolish Arabian

derweesh; or, in old times, the magnetised utterer of the oracles, or the spontaneously-propheying seer. The instinct of animals comes under this head, or appears to do so. It appears to be action of mind unattended by consciousness; and it might well therefore be taken for inspiration: and every action of the creature would then be watched for guidance, and every incident connected with it be accepted for an omen. It is as easily conceivable that the Egyptians, paying homage to beings above and below Man, actually raised the brute with his instinct above Man with his reason, in that one point of view which regarded his inspiration, as that there are men now who look with greater awe upon an idiot or crazed fanatic than on a rational person. In the old case, it was not the brutality, and in the modern case, it is not the folly, that is revered: it is the mysterious working of mental faculty, apart from the will, which appears to those ignorant of the powers and functions of the brain to be the communication of Ulterior Thought through an unconscious medium.

We do not know what the Egyptians did with the bodies of animals which they did not hold sacred. Abdallatif could find no remains of the camel, the horse or the ass: and on his inquiring of the old people in the neighbourhood of the Memphis mummy-pits, they hastened to assure him that they had been struck by the absence of all traces of these animals. This absence of all trace is curious in the case of animals which were not eaten.—It is no contradiction of the supposition that the Egyptians revered brutes for the possible reasons mentioned above, that they

sacrificed some and ate others. In some cases they chose for sacrifice animals which were hated by the particular Deity in question : as in the case of the red ox. And in eating animals not disliked by the gods, they might have the same idea that lies at the root of cannibalism and human sacrifices, in the South Sea islands, and probably everywhere else. The belief, in such cases, is that the gods wait to imbibe the spirit of the victim ; and the idea is that the victim, in passing through the gods, becomes assimilated to their nature, and remains henceforth divine, to the extent of immortality at least, and usually in some other respects. It is thus an honour and blessing to be sacrificed ; and the being eaten implies no disrespect to the perishable frame, because the body merely follows the analogy of the spirit's lot ; and what is honourable to the one part of the creature cannot be disgraceful to the other. If the nobler part entered into the gods, the meaner might enter into the sons of the gods.

The choice of animals for consecration and preservation was probably determined by the characters of their instinct. Herodotus declines to explain some particulars which were known to him, and which certainly appear to have borne, in his view, a solemn import.—How can we say that it would not have been so with ourselves, if we had stood, with Herodotus, or Plato, or Pythagoras, in the inner apartments of the priests, surrounded by the monuments of their art, and the records of their learning, and favoured with their confidence about matters of the nearest and the most general concern ! I own that in the absence of priests and papyri, when all around was dumb and

desolate, and I had no external aid to knowledge but faded pictures of offerings and fluttering mummy rags, I could not resign myself to feelings of disgust and contempt. If I had been on the banks of some South African river, seeing a poor naked savage at his Fetish worship, I must have tried to learn what idea, however low, was at the bottom of his observance: and here, where I knew that men had read the stars, and compassed invisible truths of geometry, and achieved unaccountable marvels of art, and originated, or transmitted, the theologies of the world, I could not despise them for one set of tenets and observances which remains unexplained. I might lament that analogies have been the mischievous Will-o'-the-wisp to the human intellect that they appear to have been in the valley of the Nile, as in the plains of Asia, and the groves of Greece, and the wilderness of Middle Age scholarship in Europe: but this is a sorrow which one feels in every hour of actual study, in any country of the world. I might lament that aspiration, in its young and irrepressible activity, must make so many flights into a dim world of dreams, and come back perplexed and disheartened before it can learn to fly up to the glorious and unfailing light of Nature, to replenish its life: but this regret is only what one feels every day in exploring the only true history of Man,—the history of Ideas. I might lament that the Egyptians should have so framed and illustrated their faith as that it must inevitably become corrupted in its diffusion: but this is the regret which attends the contemplation of the spread of every faith by which mankind has yet been guided. The old Egyptian faith deteri-

orated into worshipping animals; the Jewish into the Pharisaic superstitions and oppressions rebuked throughout the Gospels; and what Christianity has become, among the widest class of its professors, let the temples and congregations of the Greek and Latin churches show. Amidst these natural regrets remains the comfort that the great governing Ideas of mankind,—the guiding lights of the human intellect,—have never failed, and have scarcely suffered eclipse. The great Ideas of Moral Obligation and strict retribution, of the supreme desirableness of moral good, and the eternal “beauty of holiness,” pass from system to system, immortalising all with which they assimilate, and finally annihilating all else, dispensing the best blessings that men have ever received, and promising an increase of them in all time to come.

There was nothing else to be seen about this buried city but a tomb or two,—a sarcophagus here,—a mummy-case there.—On our return to the river, we saw sights which did not tend to raise the spirits after the depressing influence of the aspect of old Memphis. We fell in with a wedding procession which was a sad antic exhibition. We saw a great number of men at work upon the causeway which crosses the plain; and a large portion of their work consisted in carrying soil in frail-baskets, and scooping out the earth with their hands. Such is the state of manners and art on the spot where Herodotus held counsel with the wise men of the world, and where the greatest works of Man’s hands were reared by means of science and art of which the world is not now capable!

CHAPTER XIX.

VISIT TO THE PYRAMIDS.—ASCENT OF THE GREAT
PYRAMID.—INTERIOR.—TRADITIONS AND HISTORY
ABOUT THE PYRAMIDS.—THE SPHINX.—FAREWELL
TO ANCIENT EGYPT.

THE day was come which I dreaded,—the day of our expedition to the Great Pyramids. I dreaded it, because I feared a sort of disappointment most difficult to bear,—that of failing in the sight-seeing of the day. Since arriving at Thebes, I had not been well ; and I had no reason for confidence in my strength, in a place and enterprise so new. I had made up my mind not to be disconcerted if I should have to return without having been either up or into the Pyramid : but I was sorry to open my eyes upon the sunrise that morning. I went over in my mind all the stories I knew of persons who had failed, and felt that I had no better title to success than they. My comfort was in the Sphinx. I should see that, at all events.—It did not mend the matter that I found that a messenger was sent to Cairo for our letters. Three of us had had no letters of a later date than the 5th of November ; and this was the 9th of February. I knew that the winter at home was a dreadful one,—for weather, sickness and distress ; and never, I think, was I so anxious about letters from

home, or so afraid to receive them. Whatever they might be, however, they would be awaiting me on my return.

We set out for Geezeh at half-past eight, on fine handsome asses, so spirited as to be almost as good to ride as horses. To-day we once more came in sight of that curious sign of civilisation, — shaven donkeys. Dark rings were left round the legs, and the neck and hind-quarters were shaven. The scarlet housings and gay rider made a set-out very unlike what one sees of donkey-riding at home. I was not aware till I came to Egypt how dependent a donkey is on dress.

Our first adventure was being carried on men's shoulders over a muddy pond which stopped the way. We knew that our plague to-day would be from the multitude of country people who would obtrude their services upon us. At this pond the teasing began. Our dragoman met it vigorously, by trying to throw a pertinacious fellow, bigger than himself, into the water. It was a desperate scuffle, such as would make ladies shriek and fly in England: but it came to nothing, as usual. All the rest of the way, men joined us from the fields on either hand, till, when we arrived at the sand, our train was swelled to forty.

I was surprised to find myself disappointed in the Pyramids now, when it had been precisely the reverse at a distance. Instead of their growing larger as we approached, they became less and less wonderful, till at last they exactly met one's preconception, except in being rougher, and of a brighter tint. The platform on which the largest stands is higher than our reading

had given us to suppose ; and the Second Pyramid, which at a distance looks as large as the other, here sinks surprisingly. This was to me the strongest evidence of the magnitude of the Great Pyramid. Though I have spoken of disappointment on a near approach, these mighty objects were perfectly absorbing, as a little incident presently proved. One of our party said, on our arrival, "when we were passing the Sphinx —," "O ! the Sphinx !" cried I. "You don't mean that you have seen the Sphinx !"—To be sure they had : and they insisted on it that I had too ; —that I must have seen it,—could not have missed it. I was utterly bewildered. It was strange enough to have forgotten it : but not to have seen it was inexplicable. However, on visiting it, later in the day, I found I had seen it. Being intent on the Pyramid before me, I had taken the Sphinx for a capriciously-formed rock, like so many that we had passed,—forgetting that I should not meet with limestone at Geezeh. I rather doubt whether any traveller would take the Sphinx for any thing but a rock unless he was looking for it, or had his eye caught by some casual light.—One other anecdote, otherwise too personal for print, will show how engrossing is the interest of the Pyramid on the spot.—The most precious articles of property I had with me abroad were two ear-trumpets, because, in case of accident happening to them, I could not supply the loss. I was unwilling to carry my trumpet up the Pyramid,—knocking against the stones while I wanted my hands for climbing. So I left it below, in the hands of a trusty Arab. When I joined my party at the top of the Pyramid, I never remembered my trumpet :

nor did they: and we talked as usual, during the forty minutes we were there, without my ever missing it.—When I came down, I never thought of it: and I explored the inside, came out and lunched, and still never thought of my trumpet, till, at the end of three hours and a half from my parting with it, I saw it in the hands of the Arab, and was reminded of the astonishing fact that I had heard as well without it as with it, all that time. Such a thing never happened before, and probably never will again: and a stronger proof could not be offered of the engrossing interest of a visit to the Pyramid.

The Sheikh who met us on the spot, appointed our attendants;—three to each of us. Mr. E. set out first,—waving an adieu to us till we should meet aloft. He mounted with a deliberate, quiet step, such as he could keep up to the end, and reached the summit in seventeen minutes. It took me about five minutes more.

On looking up, it was not the magnitude of the Pyramid which made me think it scarcely possible to achieve the ascent; but the unrelieved succession,—almost infinite,—of bright yellow steps; a most fatiguing image!—Three strong and respectable-looking Arabs now took me in charge. One of them, seeing me pinning up my gown in front, that I might not stumble over it, gave me his services as lady's-maid. He turned up my gown all round, and tied it in a most squeezing knot, which lasted all through the enterprise. We set out from the north-east corner. By far the most formidable part of the ascent was the first six or eight blocks. If it went on to the top thus broken and precipitous, the

ascent would, I felt, be impossible. Already, it was disagreeable to look down, and I was much out of breath. One of my Arabs carried a substantial camp-stool, which had been given me in London with a view to this very adventure,—that it might divide the higher steps,—some of which, being four feet high, seem impracticable enough beforehand. But I found it better to trust to the strong and steady lifting of the Arabs in such places, and, above every thing, not to stop at all, if possible; or, if one must stop for breath, to stand with one's face to the Pyramid. I am sure the guides are right in taking people quickly. The height is not so great, in itself: it is the way in which it is reached that is trying to look back upon. It is trying to some heads to sit on a narrow ledge, and see a dazzling succession of such ledges for two or three hundred feet below; and there, a crowd of diminutive people looking up, to see whether one is coming bobbing down all that vast staircase. I stopped for a few seconds two or three times, at good broad corners or ledges.—When I left the angle, and found myself ascending the side, the chief difficulty was over; and I cannot say that the fatigue was at all formidable. The greater part of one's weight is lifted by the Arabs at each arm; and when one comes to a four feet step, or a broken ledge, there is a third Arab behind. When we arrived at a sort of recess, broken in the angle, my guides sported two of their English words, crying out “Half-way!” with great glee. The last half was easier than the first; and I felt, what proved to be true, that both must be easier than the coming down. I arrived second, and was kindly welcomed to that extraordinary spot by Mr. E.

Mrs. Y. appeared presently after; and lastly, Mr. Y.;—all in good spirits.

I was agreeably surprised to find at the top, besides blocks standing up which gave us some shade, a roomy and even platform, where we might sit and write, and gaze abroad, and enjoy ourselves, without even seeing over the edge, unless we wished it. There was only the lightest possible breeze, just enough to fan our faces, without disturbing us. The reason of our ascending the Pyramid first, before going into it, was that we might take advantage of an hour of calm, and avoid the inconvenience of the wind which might spring up at noon. And most fortunate we were in our weather, and in all other particulars. It was a glorious season,—full of new delight, without drawback;—for I now began to think I might perhaps see the inside of the Pyramid too.

Here are my notes of what we saw from the top;—a height of 480 feet. “Bearings by compass. In a line from us to the North, the hager (sandy plain) joins the fertile land, a blue stream flowing between them, and the line being wavy, and having a sprinkling of palms towards the North. In this northern direction, the green plain extends to the furthest horizon, and over to Cairo eastwards. It is dotted with villages,—clusters of brown houses among palms,—and watered with blue thread-like canals, and showing a faint line of causeway here and there.—E. by N., stands up the citadel of Cairo, the city stretching north-westwards from it. Behind the city, some way round to the N.N.E., is a low ridge of sandy hills: and the other way, southwards, the Mokuttam range, which looks higher the

higher one mounts. Round from hence are sandy hills, with alluvion and canals between them and us, as far as the S.E., where the Nile wanders away, and the Abosseer Pyramids rise. S.S.E. are the Sakkára Pyramids; and from them, round the rest of the landscape, all is desert,—terribly arid and glaring. In the midst of the sand, a train of camels, wonderfully diminutive, is winding along, and a few brown Arab tents are pitched, not far from the foot of the Pyramid. Off our S.W. corner is the Second Pyramid, standing in its sunken area, surrounded by walls, and showing by the casing that is left how much finer these Pyramids must have looked before they were so dismantled.—Beyond this, lies the little one.”—This was what we saw; and long we gazed in every direction:—most pathetically perhaps to the South, where we had seen and left so much; or over into the Delta which we should enter no more, and which lay so rich and lovely between our eyes and the horizon, that it seemed to be melting away. We began letters to friends at home, drank some water, intrepidly carried up by a little Arab girl; mounted the highest block, to get as near the sky as we could; and then found that we really must be going down.

The descent was fatiguing; but not at all alarming. Between stepping, jumping, and sliding, with full reliance on the strength and care of the guides, the descent may be easily accomplished in ten minutes;—as far, that is, as the height of the entrance to the Pyramid, which is some way from the bottom. We had bargained before starting that we should not be asked for baksheesh “while going up the Pyramid.” Our guides took this literally, and began begging, the

moment we put our feet upon the summit. And all the way down, my guides never let me alone, though they knew I had no money about me. They were otherwise extremely kind, giving me the benefit of their other two words of English. On my jumping down a particularly high block, they patted me on the back, crying, with approving nods, "Ah ! ah ! good morning ; good morning !" I joined my party at the beautiful entrance to the Pyramid, where a large assemblage of Arabs was ranged on the rising stones opposite to us, like a hill-side congregation waiting for the preacher.

I resolved that morning not to be induced by any pleasure or triumph of the hour to tell people that it is very easy to go up and into the Pyramid. To determined and practised people it is easy ; but not, probably, to the majority. I would not recommend any one to do it of whose nerve I was not sure. To the tranquil, the inside of the Pyramid is sufficiently airy and cool for the need of the hour. But it is a dreadful place in which to be seized with a panic : and no woman should go who cannot trust herself to put down panic by reason. There is absolutely nothing to fear but from one's self ; no danger of bad falls, or of going astray, or of being stifled. The passages are slippery : but there are plenty of notches ; and a fall could hardly be dangerous,—unless at one place,—the entrance upon the passage to the King's Chamber. We knew beforehand that there were air passages from that chamber to the outside ; and when I walked about before examining the place, and questioned my senses, I was surprised to find how little oppressive heat, and how much air there really was. The one danger is from the impression

upon the senses of the solidity and vastness of the stone structure in such darkness. Almost any nerves may be excused for giving way under the sight of that passage and that chamber ;—the whole, even the roof, being constructed of blocks of dark granite, so joined as that the edge of a penknife could not be inserted between them. The passage runs up, a steep inclined plane, with its lines on either hand, and its notches in front, retiring almost to a vanishing point, other grooves and projections high up the side walls apparently coming down to the same vanishing point, and all closed in by the ponderous ceiling, at such a height as to be well nigh lost in gloom. The torches of the Arabs glare near the eye, and perplex the vision by their fitful shining on the granite walls ; and at the same time, the lights in advance or far behind are like waving glow-worm sparks. There is nothing else like it ;—no catacomb or cavern in the world ; there never was, and surely there never will be. I have spent the greater part of two days in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky ; a place generally considered awful enough : but compared with this, it was like a drawing-room to a cellar. The fantastic character of its walls and roofs takes off from the impression of its vastness and gloom. Here, the symmetry and finish so deepen the gloom as to make this seem like a fit prison-house for fallen angels. Notwithstanding the plain view we obtained in the chamber of the enormous longitudinal blocks of the ceiling, the impression was less tremendous than in the descending passage, from the inferior vastness.—There is nothing but the structure itself to be seen, except the sarcophagus near one end. It is sadly broken : but it still rings like a bell,

when struck on the side.—The granite is blackened by time; but its grain is seen where it has been chipped by those who were in search of the air-holes.—The prodigious portcullises of granite in the passage were more visible to us in going down than in ascending: and how they came there was an oppressive speculation in itself. It must be remembered that this structure, with its wonderful art and bewildering grandeur, was the work of the men of five thousand years ago. It dates from the earlier part of the First Period, and is the oldest monument known to exist in the world. If this is, to us, the beginning of the Arts,—this, which manifests the existence of so many appliances of art unknown to us now, how are we to speculate on what went before? and how completely do we find ourselves thrown out in all our notions of the duration of the human race!

On returning, two of our party had had enough of Pyramid searching. I and another had not; and we proceed to the Queen's Chamber, along the passage, above which we had ascended to the King's. This passage was not so low as we had expected. It only required us to walk stooping. The chief interest about the Queen's Chamber is from its being under the apex of the Pyramid; which the King's is not. Its ceiling is on this account pointed, like the great entrance. There are also five small, rough chambers above it, evidently put there to lessen the superincumbent weight. Though this chamber is smaller than the King's, it seems to be distinguished by being under the apex; and also by a niche, rather elaborately wrought. A pit has been opened below this niche, by searchers, and the rubbish

thrown into a corner. Sir G. Wilkinson wishes that, if further search is made here for the king's body, it should be by looking *under* this niche. My great desire would be to have the Pyramid explored down to the lowest part where any traces of works could be found. Works carried down so low must have some purpose; and it might be well worth our while to discover what. It is not satisfactory to my mind to suppose the "subterranean structures" intended merely to let the workmen out, after they had closed the upper passage with its granite portcullis. The great difficulty, in exploring the Pyramid,—after the expense and toil of getting to work at all,—is from the wonderful way in which these ancient builders closed the passages. Their huge granite portcullises, blocking up the way, are almost insuperable. It is hard to distinguish them from other blocks, and to guess when there is a passage behind; and then it is very hard to get round them.—I have a strong impression myself that, after all the wonders our pains-taking and disinterested antiquarian travellers have laid open, there is much more behind, and that the exploration of the Pyramid is only just begun. If it be true that some one fired a pocket-pistol within the Pyramid, and that the echoes were countless,—the reverberation going on for an astonishing length of time,—it seems as if the edifice might be honey-combed with chambers. But for these unmanageable granite portcullises, what might we not learn!

It becomes us, however, to be grateful for what we have learned. Colonel Howard Vyse has laid the world under great obligations by his generous and

laborious exertions. He made, among many discoveries, one of inestimable importance. He found inscribed in the Pyramid, in the most antique style, the names of the Pharaohs who raised these edifices : and they turn out to be the same given by Herodotus and Manetho. It is now ascertained, beyond all doubt, that these Pyramids are the work of Pharaohs of the fourth dynasty ;—that is, of kings early succeeding Menes, and living near the beginning of the First Period of Egyptian history.

I suppose every one knows the account given by Herodotus of the building of this pyramid ;—how Cheops closed the temples, stopped the sacrifices, and made every body work for him :—how some quarried the stone in the Arabian hills, and others conveyed it to the river, and over a bridge of boats ; and others drew it to the spot where it was wanted :—and how it could be carried and mounted only by a causeway which of itself took ten years to construct, and which was a fine work, with its polished stones and figures of animals engraved on them :—how 100,000 men were employed at a time, and were relieved by the same number at the end of three months :—how, besides the ten years occupied by the causeway, much was required for levelling the rock on which the edifice stands, and twenty years for the building of the pyramid itself :—how a machine, made of short pieces of wood, was placed on every step, as the work proceeded, to raise the stones for the step above ; and how the filling in of these gradations, forming the last smooth surface, was begun from the top :—how this surface bore engraved, so that Herodotus himself saw it, an inscription which told

the expense of the vegetables eaten by the labourers during the progress of the work; and how confounded the traveller declares himself to be, judging from the sum spent in vegetables, at the thought of the expenditure further necessary for the rest of the food and the clothes of the workmen, and their iron tools, during the long course of years required for the whole series of works,—amongst which, by the way, he includes the “subterranean structures” which he again mentions, as made by the king, “for purposes of sepulture, in an island formed by the waters of the Nile, which he introduced into them by a canal.”*

All this narrative, thus briefly glanced at, is known to every body who cares about Egypt: and every body has no doubt been struck by this testimony to the use of iron tools, and the existence of polished stones, machinery, writing and engraving, between five and six thousand years ago.—But every body may not know what evidence we have of the solidity and extraordinary vastness of these works, in the impossibility which has been found of taking them to pieces. This evidence we have through our useful middle-age witness, Abdallatif, whose book is so little known that I may be rendering a service by translating some passages relating to his visits to the Pyramids in or about A.D. 1190.

Abdallatif begins with the same thought which suggested the noble saying, “All things dread Time: but Time dreads the Pyramids.” He says—

“The form which has been adopted in the construction of the Pyramids, and the solidity which has been

* Herod. II. 124.

given them, are well worthy of admiration. It is to their form that they owe the advantage of having resisted the hostility of centuries : or rather, it seems as if it were Time which has resisted the opposition of these eternal edifices. Indeed, when we meditate deeply on the construction of the Pyramids, we are compelled to acknowledge that men of the greatest genius have here employed in combination their best powers ; and that the subtlest minds have exhausted their deepest resources ; that the most enlightened souls have exercised in profusion all the abilities that they possessed which could be applied to these constructions ; and that the wisest theory of geometry has employed all its means to produce these wonders, as the last point of astonishment which it was possible to reach. Thus we may say that these edifices speak to us now of those who reared them, teach us their history, open to us in an intelligible manner the progress which they had made in the sciences, and the excellence of their abilities :—in a word, they put us in possession of the life and actions of the men of those days.”*—After telling how the Pyramids are placed with a regard to the points of the compass, and how this breaks the force of the wind, and what the gross measurements are, he goes on :—“ Their pyramidal figure is truncated ; and the summit offers thereby a level of ten cubits every way. Here is a thing which I myself observed. When I visited them, there was in our party an archer, who let fly an arrow in the direction of the perpendicular height of one of these

* Relation de l' Egypte, Livre I. ch. 4.

Pyramids, and in that of its thickness (its base;) and the arrow fell a little short of midway.* We learned that in the neighbouring village there were people accustomed to mount the pyramid, who did it without any difficulty. We sent for one of these men; and for a trifle which we gave him, he set off up the pyramid, as we should to mount a staircase, and even quicker, without putting off either his shoes or his garments, which were very ample. I had desired him to measure, with his turban, the area at the top, when he got there. When he came down, we took the measure of his turban, as it answered to that of the area at the summit. We found it to be eleven cubits, by the measure of the original cubit.”—It does not seem to have occurred to the grave physician to go up himself. It is a pity that he could not know that ladies would accomplish the feat, seven centuries after him. If he had looked abroad from the summit, what would he have done for words to express his raptures! He goes on to show how much less he dared than we:—

“One of these two pyramids is open, and offers an entrance by which the interior may be visited. This opening leads to narrow passages, to conduits which go down to a great depth, and to wells and precipices, as we are assured by such persons as have courage to explore them: for there are many people who are tempted by a foolish avarice and chimerical hopes into the interior of this edifice. They plunge into deep recesses, and come at last to a place where they find

* It is well known that the ground covered by the Great Pyramid is equal to the area of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and 50 feet over, every way;—say, Lincoln's Inn Fields and the row of surrounding houses.

it impossible to penetrate further. As for the most frequented and ordinarily-used passage, it is a glaciis which leads to the upper part of the pyramid, where there is a square chamber ; and in this chamber a sarcophagus of stone.”

Up to a recent date, there have been doubts whether the pyramid was open so long ago as this, and whether therefore the tradition was true which declares that Caliph Mamoon opened it, somewhere about A.D. 820. It is clear that in Abdallatif’s time there was no novelty in its standing open : and there seems no reason to doubt the narrative given by Arab writers of the opening by Caliph Mamoon. One of them, Abdel Hôkm, declares that a statue resembling a man (a mummy-case, no doubt,) was found in the sarcophagus ; and within the statue, a human body, with a breast-plate of gold and jewels, bearing written characters which no one understood. Abdallatif says—

“The opening by which the interior of the pyramid is reached at this day is not the original entrance ; it is a hole begun at random, and made by force. It is said it was the Caliph Mamoon who made it. The greater part of our company entered it, and went up to the higher chamber. When they came down, they gave marvellous accounts of what they had seen ; and they said that this passage was so full of bats and their dirt that it was almost stopped up : that the bats were nearly as large as pigeons ; and that there were to be seen in the upper part, open spaces and windows which seemed to have been intended to admit air and light.— In another visit which I made to the Pyramids, I entered this interior passage with several persons, and

went about two-thirds of the way along it : but having become insensible through the fear which struck me in this ascent, I came down again, half dead.

“These pyramids are constructed of great stones, from ten to twenty cubits long, and two or three cubits in the breadth and thickness. The most admirable particular of the whole is the extreme nicety with which these stones have been prepared and adjusted. Their adjustment is so precise that not even a needle or a hair can be inserted between any two of them. They are joined by a cement laid on to the thickness of a sheet of paper. I cannot tell what this mortar is made of, it being of a substance entirely unknown to me. *These stones are covered with writing in that unknown character whose import is at this day wholly unknown.* I have not met in Egypt with any person who could say that he knew, even by hearsay, of any one who understood this character. *These inscriptions are so multitudinous, that if those only which are seen on the surface of these two pyramids were copied upon paper, more than ten thousand pages would be filled with them.*”

For “pages,” Pococke here translates “books.” When we remember that Abdallatif is telling us what he himself saw, we cannot but admit this particular of his simple narrative. He goes on,

“I have read in some books of the ancient Sabceans, that, of these two pyramids, one is the tomb of Agathodemon, and the other that of Hermes. These are, they say, two great prophets ; but Agathodemon is the older and greater of the two. They say that from all the countries of the world, people come in pilgrimage to

these two pyramids.—In my great work, I have enlarged upon this subject; and I have related what others have said of these edifices. To that account I refer those who desire further details. Here, I limit myself to what I have myself seen.

“When Melic-alaziz Othman-ben-Yousouf had succeeded his father, he let himself be persuaded by some of his courtiers,—foolish people,—to demolish these pyramids: and they began with the red* pyramid, which is the third and smallest of the three great pyramids.

“The Sultaun sent there his sappers, miners and quarrymen, under the superintendence of some of the principal officers and first Emirs of his court, and gave them orders to destroy it. To execute these orders, they established their camp near the pyramid: they collected there a multitude of labourers from all quarters, and maintained them at great cost. They remained there eight entire months, occupied, with all their people, in executing their commission, carrying away, each day, after extreme exertion and exhaustion, two or three stones. Some pushed them from above with wedges and levers, while others drew them away from the base with ropes and cables. Whenever one of these stones fell, it made a fearful noise, which echoed far off, shook the earth, and made the hills tremble. By its fall, it was buried in the sand; and then, great efforts were made to remove it: after which the people wrought grooves for the wedges to enter; and thus the stones were split into several pieces:—then each fragment was placed upon a car, to be

* So called from its being made of red granite.

carried to a mountain a little way off, and thrown out at its foot.

“After the company had remained a long time encamped on this spot, when their pecuniary means were all expended, while their trouble and fatigue went on increasing, and their resolution growing weaker, day by day, and their strength was utterly exhausted, they were obliged ignominiously to quit their enterprise. Far from obtaining the result they had anticipated, and succeeding in their design, they ended by doing nothing but spoiling the pyramid, and evidencing their own powerlessness. This passed in the year 593 (A.D. 1196). When one now looks at the stones brought down in the course of the demolition, one is persuaded that the pyramid has been destroyed from its foundation: but when, on the other hand, one looks up at the pyramid, one believes that it has suffered no injury whatever, and that nothing has happened but the paring off of a portion of the casing on one of its sides.

“Observing one day what extremely heavy work it was to remove a single stone, I addressed one of the superintendents who was directing the workmen, and put this question to him—‘If any one offered you a thousand pieces of gold to replace one of these stones, and adjust it as it was before, do you think you could accomplish it?’ His answer was that if many times as much was offered, they could not do such a thing; and this he affirmed with an oath.”*

I fear that all such descriptions are thrown away, in regard to the object of giving to the readers of them

* Relation de l’Egypte, Livre I. ch. 4.

any idea of what the Pyramids are. They are useful as records, however, and extremely interesting to travellers in going over the ground. As for the impression,—there is nothing like the momentary sensation of seeing the blue daylight at the top of the entrance passage, when one is on one's way out. More real astonishment is felt at that moment than from reading all the descriptions of all authors.

After resting for luncheon on a block on the east side of the Pyramids, we visited some tombs, very interesting from their extreme antiquity, but too much like those of Benee Hasan to justify description here. The preparations for feasts, numbering stock, &c., go on here as elsewhere, showing that people lived, between five and six thousand years ago, much as they do now.—It was hereabouts that that precious ring was found which ought to be in the British Museum, but which remains in the hand of Dr. Abbott, at Cairo,—the gold ring of Cheops, with his cartouche cut upon it. In Dr. Abbott's possession too are some gold ornaments with "Menes" marked upon them. Treasures of such singular value as these should surely be national property.

And now the time was come for visiting the Sphinx. What a monstrous idea was it from which this monster sprang! True as I think Abdallatif's account of it, and just as is his admiration, I feel that a stranger either does not see the Sphinx at all, or he sees it as a nightmare. When we first passed it, I saw it only as a strange looking rock; an oversight which could not have occurred in the olden time, when the head bore the royal helmet or the ram's horns. Now I was half-afraid of it. The full serene gaze of its round face,

rendered ugly by the loss of the nose, which was a very handsome feature of the old Egyptian face ;—this full gaze, and the stony calm of its attitude almost turn one to stone. So life-like,—so huge,—so monstrous,—it is really a fearful spectacle. I saw a man sitting in a fold of the neck,—as a fly might settle on a horse's mane. In that crease he reposed, while far over his head extended the vast penthouse of the jaw ; and above that, the dressed hair on either side the face,—each bunch a mass of stone which might crush a dwelling house. In its present state, its proportions cannot be obtained ; but Sir G. Wilkinson tells us * “Pliny says it measured from the belly to the highest part of the head sixty-three feet : its length was one hundred and forty three : and the circumference of its head round the forehead one hundred and two feet ; all cut out in the natural rock, and worked smooth.” Fancy the long well-opened eyes, in such proportion as this,—eyes which have gazed unwinking into vacancy, while mighty Pharaohs, and Hebrew law-givers, and Persian princes, and Greek philosophers, and Anthony with Cleopatra by his side, and Christian anchorites, and Arab warriors, and European men of science, have been brought hither in succession by the unpausing ages to look up into those eyes,—so full of meaning, though so fixed ! We have here a record of the Egyptian complexion, or of the Egyptians' own notion of it, as well as of the characteristic features of the race. There is red paint on the face, of the same tint as the complexions in the tombs. The face is (supposing the nose restored) much like the Berber countenance. The long

* Modern Egypt and Thebes, I. 356.

mild eye, the thick, but not protuberant lips, (lips like Malibran's, and like no others that I ever saw in Europe) and the projecting jaw, with the intelligent, gentle expression of the whole face, are very like what one sees in Nubia at every village. That man sitting in the fold of the neck was a happy accident. It enabled one to estimate proportions, when looking up from below : and to learn how it was that religious processions marched up between its paws to the temple sheltered by its breast. I could see how the sanctuary and altar of sacrifice might very well stand there, so towered over by the neck and head as that the savour of the sacrifices might rise straight up into its nostrils. The granite tablet above this altar is visible, peeping out of the sand in the hollow. The ridge of the back is above ground, and I walked along it from the neck to the root of the tail.—If only the paws could be kept uncovered, it would much improve our conception of this strange work,—perhaps, as my journal observes, the strangest object I ever saw.

While riding away, I turned to give a last look, and was struck with the ugliness of the scene. The Pyramids lessened in height from north to south, and were scattered about without evident plan : tombs yawned in the yellow rocks :—the Sphinx lay low, and seemed to belong to nothing ; and the whole vast, desolate circuit of monuments was incumbered by rubbish.—This was my last glimpse into the ancient world, except that I had the obelisk at Heliopolis yet to see. This was my last clear view into the times of the vanished race. As I turned my face towards Cairo, the cloud curtain was again drawn over the living and

moving scene which I had studied for so long : and anything more that I might learn must be by thought, and not by sight.

The amount of what one does learn by the eye is very great ;—really astonishing in the case of a people whose literature is lost, instead of remaining as an indication of what one is to look for, and a commentary on what one sees. What do we not owe to their turn for engraving and painting ! Here is a people remaining only, as one may say, in the abstract !—living only in the ideas they have bequeathed to us, and in the undecayed works of their hands. No one of that great race survives : we have their corpses in plenty ; but not a breathing man left of them all. We do not know what their complexion was : their language is lost, except as studious men pick it up, word by word, with painful uncertainty, from an obscure cypher. But, phantoms as they are to us, how much do they teach us !

They teach us to be modest and patient in regard to our knowledge of the ancient world, by showing us that while we have been talking confidently of the six thousand years of human existence, and about who was who in the earliest days, we have in reality known nothing about it. They rebuke us sufficiently in showing us that at that time men were living very much as we do ;—without some knowledge that we have gained, but in possession of some arts which we have not. They confound us by their mute exhibitions of their iron tools and steel armour ; their great range of manufactures, and their feasts and sports, so like our own. In their kitchens they decant wine by a syphon, and strew their

sweet cakes with seeds, and pound their spices in a mortar. In the drawing-room, they lounge on chaises-longues, and the ladies knit and net as we do, and darn better than we can. I saw at Dr. Abbott's a piece of mending left unfinished several thousand years ago, which any Englishwoman might be satisfied with or proud of. In the nursery the little girls had dolls; jointed dolls, with bunchy hair and long eyes; as our dolls have blue eyes and fair tresses. And the babies had, not the woolly bow-wow dogs which yelp in our nurseries, but little wooden crocodiles with snapping jaws. In the country we see the agriculturists taking stock; and in the towns, the population divided into castes, subject to laws, and living under a theocracy, long before the supposed time of the Deluge. There is enough here to teach us some humility and patience about the true history of the world.

We almost lose sight of the evidences of their ways that they have left us in recognising the Ideas that they have recorded and transmitted. Here they were, nearly two thousand years before the birth of Abraham, worshipping One Supreme God, and owning him for their King, appointing for his agent and chief servant as their ruler, a priest whom they called his son. They recognised his moral government;—always strictly a moral government, through how many hands soever it might be administered—whether those of his personified attributes, or those of his human instruments. The highest objects set before these people were purity of life and rectitude of conduct. Their highest aspirations were directed to the glory and favour of God in this life, and acceptance by him hereafter. Their

conceptions of death were that it was a passage to an eternal existence, where a divine benefactor, sent to dispense the mercies of the Supreme, had gone before them, having submitted to death, in order to overcome the power of evil, and who had therefore been raised from among the dead, when his probation in Hades was ended, and made the eternal Judge of the living and the dead. Those whom he judged favourably had their names written in the book of Life, and were brought to taste of the tree of Life, which would make them to be as gods: after which they were to enjoy such bliss as it has not entered into men's hearts to conceive. The wicked were meanwhile to undergo shame and anguish till they had expiated the very last sin, or were to be destroyed.

They believed the creation to have taken place as they annually saw re-creation take place. They said that the Spirit of the Supreme moved on the face of the waters; and that the dry land appeared at his bidding, yielding vegetation first, and then animals. They believed in a substantial firmament, wherein the sun and moon were placed, which were privileged to travel, with the spirits of the virtuous in their train, through a long series of Mansions in the great abode of the Supreme.—They taught that every mind, whether of man or brute, was an emanation from the Supreme; and that the body was only its abode and instrument; the soul being, from its nature and derivation, immortal.

Such were the Idcas transmitted to other countries and to future races by this very ancient people. That such were their ideas, we know by a far surer medium

than tradition ;—though that also is not wanting. By the hearing of the ear, and the sympathy of the mind they transmitted these Ideas in their living force. By their sculptures, their paintings and their legends they immutably recorded them.

All knowledge is sacred. All truth is divine. It is not for us to mix up passion and prejudice with our perception of new facts. We may not like to be perplexed by new knowledge which throws us out of some notions which we took for knowledge before. We are apt to feel our own spiritual privileges lessened by its appearing that they were held for many ages before the time which we had supposed. It might be enough to leave the minds of students of the past to subside and grow tranquil, (as minds always do, sooner or later,) in the sublime presence of facts : but I would just ask whether the great guiding Ideas of mankind are the more or the less venerable for having wrought for some thousands of years longer than we had imagined ; and whether it is or is not a testimony to the power of those Ideas that they raised into spiritual light a race which thereby became the greatest in the ancient world, preserved their empire through a longer duration than that of any other known people, and were made the source of enlightenment to nations then and still unborn. If, weak in our partial knowledge, and in the prejudices of our whole lives, we need reconciling to the facts of the Egyptian history of Mind, I think these testimonies to the power and saving character of these venerable Ideas may have a cheering efficacy, and can have no other.

Here, as I said, the volume of ancient Egyptian

history was closed to us. We had Cairo before our eyes as we rode away, and found letters from England on board our boat :—happy letters which were a rebuke to our anxiety :—at least I may say this for myself.

We were not injuriously fatigued by our most successful excursion :—rather tired in the evening, and very stiff the next day ; but nobody ill, and everybody well satisfied.—It was no satisfaction to any of us that our Nile voyage was over : but this was an inevitable misfortune ; and we bore it as well as we could.

CHAPTER XX.

INUNDATION OF THE NILE.—FAMINE IN EGYPT.

WE hear so much of the regularity of the overflow of the Nile, that we are apt to forget that it may fail, or to contemplate the consequences in such a case. It is true, we read of the seven years of famine in Joseph's time: but we think of that as a kind of miracle, and do not ask whether such a misfortune ever happened again, when a less sagacious and politic minister than Joseph was at the head of affairs. There is some information extant about this; and it may be of sufficient interest to justify us in dwelling upon it a little.

It is amusing to observe how, according to Herodotus, the Egyptians and Greeks pitied each other for their respective ways of having their lands watered. The priests told Herodotus of a time when a rise of eight cubits sufficed to water the land below Memphis; whereas "now," he says,* "if the river does not rise sixteen cubits,† or at least fifteen, it does not cover

* Herod. II. 13.

† The priests were possibly speaking of a different measure from the cubit of the time of Herodotus. The cubit originally signified the length from the bend of the elbow to the end of the middle finger. It is believed that among the Hebrews there were two cubit-measures;—one of 18 inches, and the other of 21 inches. Sir G. Wilkinson gives the cubit at the Nilometer at Elephantine as measuring $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft.—i.e., $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches. There were 28 digits in a cubit.

the fields. If the land continues to rise in the same proportion,"—(a proportion which he calculated on mistaken dates, as the event has shown), "and to receive the same augmentations as hitherto, the Nile no longer covering it with its waters, it seems to me that the Egyptians who dwell below Lake Mœris, and in other districts, and especially in what is called the Delta, must continually experience at last the same fate as that with which they suppose the Greeks to be threatened, sooner or later: for, having learned that the whole of Greece is watered by rains, and not by the inundation of the rivers, as in their country, they say that if the Greeks should ever be disappointed of their hopes, they would run the risk of perishing miserably by famine. By this they mean to convey that if, instead of raining in Greece, there should come a drought, they would die of hunger, because they have no other resource than the waters of the sky.—This reflection of the Egyptians upon the Greeks is just: but now let us see to what extremity they themselves may be reduced. If it should happen, as I said before, that the region below Memphis, which is that which receives accumulations, should go on rising as it has done hitherto, must it not certainly happen that the Egyptians who inhabit it must experience the horrors of famine, since it does not rain in their country, and the river can no longer overspread their fields? But there is nobody now, in the rest of Egypt, or even in the whole world, who obtains a harvest with less care and toil."—After all these wise and kind apprehensions on each other's account, the people of neither of the two countries have seen the other lapse into desert, or

the inhabitants exterminated by a permanent failure of water. Seedtime and harvest have not yet ceased.—In Egypt, however, they have intermitted: and terrible have those seasons been. Abdallatif's account of one of them is dreadful to read, at the end of nearly seven centuries.

One is filled with astonishment at the constancy of the overflow, and the regularity of its amount, when one learns what are the consequences of a small diminution or excess of the ordinary quantity; and perhaps it is as perplexing to men of science as to other people that such regularity should accrue from any such sources as those to which the inundation of the Nile has yet been attributed. If the Messrs. Abbadie should return in safety to Europe, to tell us what they believe they have discovered respecting the fountains of the Nile, we may know something ere long which may relieve our perplexity. Meantime, it appears to us one of the chief wonders of the natural world that the mountains of Abyssinia should so punctually gather the clouds about them, and entice the rains, as to send out streams of the same force, which shall water two thousand miles of country to within a few inches of the same height, and a few hours of the same time, year by year, for as many ages as are known to man.

The highest point reached by the inundation, and very rarely reached, is a little above nineteen cubits. In this case, much cultivable land remains so long submerged that the sowing cannot take place; and it is as barren as the desert for that year, while some spots which are ordinarily dry yield a harvest for once. Of course, there is a great destruction of dwellings and of

stock in this case.—When the rise reaches eighteen cubits, there is great rejoicing, for the produce is then sufficient for two years' consumption, after the government dues are paid. When it reaches sixteen cubits, there is enough produce for the wants of the year; and this was called, in Abdallatif's time, "the Sultaun's flood," because then the Sultaun claimed his taxes.—Below sixteen cubits, there is more or less scarcity. In such a case, the south wind has prevailed: and in good years, the north.

The lowest Nile ever known seems to have been that of A.D. 966, when the waters rose only to twelve cubits, seventeen digits: and the next lowest was in A.D. 1199, when it rose only four digits higher. For four centuries before the earliest of these dates, the Nile had only six times failed to reach fourteen cubits; and about twenty times only had it stopped short of fifteen cubits.—The inundation begins about the 25th of June, and reaches its height in three months. It remains stationary about twelve days, and then begins to subside.

Niebuhr gives a full account of popular methods of divination as to what the Nile will be pleased to do that year. The Mohammedans believe, he says,* that the fall of a drop of water from heaven upon a place in Abyssinia is the cause of the inundation; and that this drop falls on the night of the 17th and 18th of June. As the Mohammedan months vary, they use the Coptic time for this calculation. On that night, about every second house in Cairo had, in Niebuhr's time, a piece of paste laid out upon the roof; and if it was found

* Voyage en Arabie, tom. I. p. 104.

heavier in the morning than at night, it was a settled matter that the Drop had fallen in Abyssinia, and that there would be a good Nile. We should suppose this to be owing to a heavy dew: but the people would have it that it was of no consequence whether the paste was laid out within the house or on the roof.—Another method was to expose equal weights of dry Nile soil and water; if, in the morning, the earth had sucked up all the water, it would be a sterile year; if any remained, there would be a good flood. Niebuhr tried this experiment repeatedly; and there was always water remaining: whence he drew the conclusion that the soil of the valley will not absorb its own weight of water.—Another popular method of divination was to set out on the house-tops at night, little paper-boxes containing a small portion of wheat. Each box was inscribed with the name of a Coptic month; and all were of equal weight. The box which was heaviest in the morning showed in what month the inundation would reach its height. As was natural, the people tried to learn a little more while they were about it; and some fortune-telling was joined with the other experiments. The best informed people laughed at the whole matter as an amusement of the women: but nevertheless, about every other house in Cairo had something laid out upon its roof on the night of the 17th of June.—The Christians were in no way behind the Mohammedans in their experiments. They had their paste and their Nile soil, and their calculations of uncertain times, connecting their observances, however, with their saints' days. They professed a caution greater than their neighbours thought of; declaring

that unless three of their experiments yielded the same result, none were to be relied on.

The people dreaded falling stars at this time of year. Learned men said that if they all tended to the same point of the heavens, this indicated only what winds would prevail : and the winds are largely concerned in the inundation. Learned and ignorant seem to have agreed that if these meteors abounded in the whole sky, it was a forewarning of a low Nile ; and also of political troubles. In A.D. 902, fiery meteors filled the air : and lo ! the Nile rose only to thirteen cubits, and the dynasty of the Tooloonides was overthrown ; the last of them reigning only ten days. Again, in A.D. 912, the same signs occurred, and were followed by scarcity and civil war. Abdallatif observes, after quoting the chronicler who tells these things, " These are certainly very strong indications ; but they are common to all countries, and not peculiar to Egypt. But we observed the same things in this year (A.D. 1199). At the beginning of the year (Mohammedan) stars darted across the sky ; and at the end, the waters were very low : and in this same year, the Sovereign who ruled in Egypt was dethroned by his uncle Melic-aladel, after they had been at war." He tells us elsewhere, however, that an ambassador from Abyssinia brought to Cairo, in August of that year, a letter from his sovereign, (about appointing a new Patriarch in the place of the one who had just died ;) in which letter it was stated that the rains had that season been very moderate ; and that this was the reason of the lowness of the Nile.

It is a sign of a bad inundation if the waters of the

river have a green tinge and a bad odour at the time of the visible rise of the flood. The aquatic mosses and vegetable fibres which occasion this corrupt state of the water ought to be carried away quickly by the force of the current sweeping through, and washing out, the stagnant pools and nooks of the damp shores. It is a bad sign if the current is so low and lazy as merely to float this corruption. In the first year of dearth of which Abdallatif gives an account, the water was insufferable to the taste and smell; and all who could had recourse to well-water. He boiled the Nile water; but that only made it worse: and when he let a portion stand in a narrow-necked bottle, and then took off the scum, he found the water, though then clear, as fetid as ever. This plague lasted, in that terrible year, all through June and July and part of August: and besides the putrid vegetable matter, there were worms and other creatures that swarm in stagnant water. Almost as soon as they were gone, the inundation reached its limit for that year. On the 9th of September, it stood no higher than twelve cubits, twenty-one digits; and it then began to decline. The inhabitants could scarcely have had time to fill their cisterns, which they do when the waters have become red (as they call it) and not before: that is, when they bring down earth in suspension, instead of decayed vegetation. After filtering, or when the earth has subsided, the water of the Nile is the finest conceivable.

In the time of Abdallatif, the people sat watching the rise of the waters, as at this day: and terrible must have been the consternation when it appeared,

on the 9th of September, that the scanty flood was already subsiding. Many thousands were watching there, who would presently be beyond the reach of mortal hope or fear, listening for the voice of the crier who would never proclaim another inundation.—I will give, from Abdallatif, some account of the state of Egypt this year,—believing his to be the only detailed history we have of such a season in Egypt; and certain that every one must feel interest in having presented to him such a proof of the blessing that Joseph was to the nation of his time, in preserving them from such horrors as a single year of drought inevitably brings, when no preparation is made for it. I shall, however, omit the most horrible and disgusting details, as occasioning more pain than they would be worth to us in this place, though they could hardly be spared from their own.

“Under these circumstances,” says Abdallatif,* “the year presented itself as a monster whose wrath must annihilate all the resources of life, and all the means of subsistence. There was no longer any hope of a further rise of the Nile; and already therefore the price of provisions had risen: the provinces were desolated by drought; the inhabitants foresaw an inevitable scarcity; and the fear of famine excited tumultuous commotions among them. The inhabitants of the villages and country estates repaired to the great provincial towns: large numbers emigrated to Syria, Magreb, Hedjaz, and Yemen, where they dispersed themselves on every hand, as did formerly the descendants of Saba. There was also an infinite number who

* Relation de l’Egypte, Livre II. ch. 2.

sought a retreat in the towns of Misr* and Cairo, where they experienced a frightful famine and mortality; for when the sun had entered Aries, the air had become corrupt, pestilence and a mortal contagion began to be felt; and the poor, pressed by a continually increasing famine, ate carrion, corpses, dogs and the dung of animals. They went further, even devouring little children. It was not an uncommon thing to surprise people with infants roasted or boiled. The commandant of the city caused all who committed this crime to be burned alive, as well as those who ate that meat. I myself saw in a basket an infant that had been roasted. It was brought to the magistrate; and with it a man and woman who were said to be its parents, and whom the magistrate sentenced to be burned alive.

“In the month of Ramadhan, a corpse was found at Misr, which had been stripped of its flesh for food, and whose legs were tied, like those of a sheep prepared for cooking. Galen desired in vain to obtain a sight of such a skeleton; and there were no means that he did not attempt for the purpose. This spectacle has been no less sought by all who have devoted themselves to the study of anatomy.

“When the poor began to eat human flesh, the horror and astonishment caused by the practice were such that these crimes were the material of every one’s conversation; and the subject seemed inexhaustible: but afterwards people became so accustomed to it, and

* By Misr, Abdallatif throughout means Old Cairo, originally called Fostat. It was built by the Mohammedan conqueror of Egypt, (A. D. 638) on the site of the Egyptian Babylon. The founder made it the capital and royal residence, which it continued to be for about two centuries and a half.

such a relish began to spread for this detestable food, that some came to make it their ordinary meat, to eat it as a treat, and even to lay in a stock of it: different ways of preparing this flesh were made known: and the use of it being once introduced, the custom extended into the provinces, so that there was no part of Egypt where it might not be met with. Then it no longer caused any surprise; the horror which it had at first inspired ceased to be felt; and people spoke and heard of it as an indifferent and ordinary thing."

In this indifference lay the best hope of the cessation of the practice; for it is usually found that monstrous practices which arise out of extremity spread like a diabolical fashion; and the distracted minds which are shaken by affliction find a sort of relief in the excitement of desperate practices: and when the strangeness and novelty are over, the habitual disgust and compunction are pretty sure to return. It appears in the later parts of Abdallatif's narrative that it was so in this instance. After citing some atrocious cases, he goes on to say,—

"There were children of the poor, some in infancy and some growing up, who had no one to look after them and protect them, spread through all the quarters of the city, and in the narrowest streets, like locusts that are beaten down in the fields. Poor people, men and women, lay in wait for these wretched children, carried them off, and ate them. It was rarely that they could be detected in the very act, and when they were not on their guard. It was generally women who were so caught: a circumstance which, in my opinion, occurred only because women have less ingenuity

("finesse") than men, and cannot fly and hide themselves with so much readiness. In the space of a few days, as many as thirty women were burnt, every one of whom confessed that she had eaten several children. I saw one led before the magistrate, who had a roasted infant suspended from her neck. Two hundred stripes were inflicted upon her, to draw from her an avowal of her crime; but no reply could be wrung from her. It even appeared as if she had lost all the faculties which characterise human nature. Then she was led away by force, and she expired in the street."

Doubtless she was no longer human, but rendered brutish and idiotic by extremity. After telling how the bodies of the burnt criminals were eagerly sought, "as already cooked," and some other atrocities, our physician proceeds to relate the peculiar dangers of his medical brethren—

"Among the abandoned people, there were some who laid every sort of snare to surprise men, and to entrap them into their houses on false pretences. This was what happened to three physicians who were accustomed to visit me. . . . The third was summoned by a man to accompany him to a sick person who lived, he said, in the Schari (the great street). As they went along, the man gave alms of small coin; and he said (out of the Kurán), *It is to-day that there will be retribution, and a reward which shall double that that is given away. Let those who act in view of such a recompense.* This was repeated so often, that the physician began to suspect some foul play. However, the good opinion he had of this man led him on; and besides, the desire of gain actuated him; and

therefore he permitted himself to be introduced into a half-ruined mansion. Its appearance increased his alarm; and he stopped upon the staircase, while his guide went before him, and opened the door. A comrade came to meet them, and said, 'After keeping us so long, you have brought us good game, I hope.' These words struck terror into the heart of the physician. He leaped through an open window which he happily perceived, into a stable. The owner of the stable came, and asked him what was the matter: but the physician took good care not to tell him, not venturing to trust him. Then the man said to him, 'I know about your adventure: the people who live here surprise men and kill them.'"

It may be hoped that this was a *mauvaise plaisanterie*, appropriate to the time. But much that Abdallatif saw was only too real and indubitable. He says,

"If we were to relate all the anecdotes of this kind that we have heard told, or have seen with our own eyes, we should run the risk of being suspected of exaggeration, or accused of a too copious gossip. All the facts which we have related as eye-witnesses, have come under our notice without any design on our part, and without our having gone on purpose to the places where they were likely to happen: chance only made us witnesses of them; for, far from seeking them, we generally avoided the sight of them, so great was our horror of such things. Those, on the other hand, who were in the house of the magistrate, to be present at these tragic scenes, saw cases of this sort, of every kind and degree, all day and all night long."

"This frightful calamity which I have just represented,

extended over all Egypt: there was not a single inhabited spot where the practice of eating human flesh did not become extremely common. Syene, Kous, the Faioum, Mahalleh, Alexandria, Damietta, and all other parts of Egypt, were witnesses of these scenes of horror.—A merchant, a friend of mine, a man on whom one may rely, told me, on his return from Alexandria, many facts of the nature of those which I have related, which had passed before his own eyes: and the most remarkable thing that he told me was that he had seen five children's heads in the same boiler, prepared with exquisite spices.—And now, here is enough on this part of the subject, upon which, though I have enlarged a good deal, it appears to me that I have been very brief."

He then gives an account of the murders on the river and the roads; and continues,

"As for the number of the poor who perished from hunger and exhaustion, God alone knows what it was. What we shall say of it must be regarded only as a slight sketch which may convey some idea of the fearful excess reached by this mortality. One thing of which I may speak as having seen it myself, at Misr, at Cairo, and in the neighbouring places, is that wherever one went, there was not a spot in which one's feet or one's eyes were not encountered by a corpse, or a man in the agonies of death, or even a great number in this dreadful state. Day by day, from one hundred to five hundred dead bodies were taken from Cairo, to be carried to the place where they might have funeral rites. At Misr the number of dead was incalculable. They were not buried, but merely cast out of the town. At last, there were not enough living left to carry away the dead, and

they remained in the open air, among the houses and shops, or even in the interior of dwellings. You might see a corpse falling to pieces in the very place where a cook or a baker, or other tradesman, was carrying on his business.

“As for the suburbs and villages, all the inhabitants perished, except a small number, of whom a portion quitted their abodes to go somewhere else. We must scarcely except from what I have now said the capitals of the provinces, and the largest villages. . . A traveller often passed through a large village without seeing a single living inhabitant. He saw the houses standing open, and the corpses of those who had lived there stretched out opposite one another,—some decayed, and some recently dead. Very often, there was a house full of furniture, without any one to take possession of it. What I am now saying has been communicated to me by several persons whose narratives confirmed each other. One of them said as follows:—‘We arrived at a village, and there found no living thing, on the earth or in the air. Having entered the houses, the state in which the inhabitants appeared offered us an exact picture of what God says in this passage of the Kurán, *We have mowed them all down, and exterminated them.* We saw the inhabitants of each house extended dead, the husband, the wife, and the children. From thence we went to another village, where we were told that there had been till now four hundred weaving shops: and it presented to us the same scene of desolation as the first. We saw the weaver dead in his loom-pit,* and all his dead family round him. I was here reminded

* See Vol. I. p. 130.

of that other text of the Kurán, *One single cry was heard, and they all perished.* We then proceeded,' says the same person, 'to another village, where we found things just in the same state: no creature living, and the inhabitants having all become the prey of death. As we were obliged to remain there, in order to sow the lands, we had to hire people to carry away the bodies, and throw them into the Nile, at the rate of a piece of silver * for every ten bodies. At last,' added this person, 'the wolves and hyænas succeeded to the inhabitants, feeding on their carcasses.'

"This is one of the most remarkable things which I myself saw," continues Abdallatif. "As I was one day, in company with several other persons, in a place which overlooked the Nile, there passed before our eyes, in the course of one hour, about ten corpses, swollen and puffed up like water-skins filled with air. We saw them by chance, not having directed our attention that way, and without commanding from our station the whole breadth of the Nile. The next day, being in a boat, we saw on the canal and on all the banks, scattered limbs like,—to use a comparison of the poet Amri-alkaïs,—'the roots of bulbous plants which have been drawn out of the ground.' I have heard of a fisherman of the port of Tennis who saw pass near him, in a single day, four hundred corpses which the waters of the river carried with them to the sea.

"According to the testimony of a great number of

* The value of these "pieces" of gold and silver has varied largely; but Mr. Lane, in his notes to the "Arabian Nights," advises us to suppose them to average,—the piece of gold, half a guinea or ten shillings, and the piece of silver about sixpence.

witnesses, the road between Egypt and Syria was like a vast field sown with human bodies: or rather, like a plain which has just been swept by the scythe of the mower. It had become as a banquet-hall for the birds and wild beasts which gorged themselves on their flesh: and the very dogs that these fugitives had taken with them, to share their exile, were the first to devour their bodies.

“The inhabitants of the Hauf” (a district to the east of the Nile, below Cairo) “when they retired into Syria to find pasturage, were the first who perished upon this road: long as it is, it was strewn with their corpses, like locusts which have been broiled;” (by the fires lighted to smoke them down:) “and to this moment, some are yet perishing there. The emigration transported some to Mosul, to Bagdad, to the countries of Korasan, of the Greek empire, of Africa, and of Yemen: and they were dispersed into all parts. It often happened that, among this crowd of emigrants, a woman slipped away from her children, and thus abandoned the unhappy little creatures, who were tormented by hunger till death put an end to their sufferings.”

After a dreadful notice of the sale for bread of people of condition, Abdallatif tells us what he considers the most wonderful thing in the whole history; a thing which to us does not appear wonderful at all: that, notwithstanding such a complexity of woes as distinctly revealed the wrath of God, men continued to adore the idols of their criminal passions without any amendment, and still wallowed in the sea of their sins. He seems to be unaware that the tempting devils of human passions are roused and exasperated and hardened by

such hopeless misery as leaves them nothing more to fear from the anger of God, which, in such a season, becomes to them a mere empty name.

He next tells us of the strange appearance of a multitude of dwellings without any one to inhabit them. "I ought not," he says, "to omit noticing the depopulation of towns and villages, and the desertion of the unpeopled houses and shops :—this last trait belongs to the picture which I have undertaken to draw. . . . Even at Cairo, the mansions, the houses and the shops situated in the heart of the town, and in the best quarters, are for the most part, empty or deserted, so that, in the most frequented part of this capital there is a mansion composed of more than fifty apartments which have all remained empty except four, where some people are lodged to take care of the place. The inhabitants of Cairo at the present time use no other fuel for their hearths and ovens than rafters, doors, and posts.—It is however a thing well worthy of wonder that among people who had always before been unfortunate, there are some who have made a fortune this year. Some have amassed wealth by trade in corn; others by coming to rich inheritances: some others have grown wealthy without any one knowing how. Blessed be He who distributes or withholds his gifts according to His good pleasure, and who gives a share of His favours to all creatures!"

As the waters were so low previous to the inundation of this year as to leave the Nilometer completely dry, it is obvious that the flood must be again inadequate, unless a most unusual amount of water came down. And it was inadequate: yet the account of the second

year leaves the reader consoled and hopeful ; so that I will give a few passages, which are also necessary to the completeness of the narrative.

Not only did the Nile cease to flow at the base of the Nilometer on the Geezeh side ; it left a long and broad island, where fragments of ancient constructions were observed. I wish Abdallatif had told us what these ancient constructions appeared to be. If he had, we might have learned some secrets about the bed of the river, and about the changes of its course. The corruption of the water was very great this year. The inundation took place languidly, sometimes stopping ; and once, for three days, when the people gave up all for lost, and prepared themselves for total destruction. This was on the 9th of August. But it rose again, at irregular intervals, till the 4th of September, when it reached fifteen cubits, sixteen digits. It began to sink the same day, before the ground could imbibe much of the benefit, and declined so rapidly that not nearly all the districts felt the inundation, and some of those very scantily. Abdallatif observes, "One would have said that it was only the phantom of the inundation which had visited them, like those spectres that we imagine we see in a dream, and which immediately vanish. Only the level lands profited by the inundation : and the lower provinces, as Garbiyyeh and some others, were sufficiently watered : but the villages were entirely emptied of cultivators and labourers. This text of the Kurán might be applied to them, *The next morning nothing was seen of them but their habitations.* The rich collected their scattered dependants, and brought together the few labourers who remained to

them. Labourers and cattle were so rare that a bull in good condition was sold for seventy pieces of gold ; and one which was in poor plight for a little less.—In the greater part of the country districts, the waters retired too soon, and before the lands had been duly soaked, because there was no one to shut in the waters, and detain them upon the fields : and this was the reason why such lands remained untilled though they had partaken of the inundation. Many which had been watered enough remained fallow, because the proprietors could neither provide the seed nor pay the expenses of cultivation. Of the fields which were sown, many were laid waste by the vermin which devoured the seed : and of the seed which escaped this destruction, much gave out only a weak blade which presently perished.

“It is from God that consolation must be looked for : for it is He who, by His goodness and liberality, determines happy events.”

Till the middle of the second year, every thing continued to grow worse. “Fewer poor perished,” says Abdallatif,* “not because the cause of their destruction was altered, but only because they were reduced to a small number.—The practice of eating human flesh became less common ; and at last we heard no more of it. The provisions exposed for sale in the market were more rarely stolen, because vagabonds had almost disappeared from the town. The price of provisions fell till the ardeb of wheat† was sold for three pieces of gold” (it had been five) “but this abatement of price

* Relation de l' Egypte, Livre II. ch. 3.

† A little under five bushels.

was owing to the small number of consumers, and not to the abundance of food. The city was relieved by the loss of the greater part of its population; and all that it contained was reduced in the same proportion. People became accustomed to the dearness of provisions; and by dint of enduring famine, they had, as it were, contracted the habit, like that of a natural state of things." . . .

"I have been assured that there had previously been at Misr nine hundred machines for weaving mats; and that now only fifteen remained. We have only to apply the same proportion to the other trades which are carried on in that town; to the shop-keepers, bakers, grocers, shoemakers, tailors and other artisans. The numbers employed in each of these were reduced in the same proportion as the mat weavers; or in a greater.

"Fowls failed altogether, except a few which were brought from Syria. I have heard that an inhabitant of Egypt, seeing himself reduced to indigence, was, as it were, inspired by God to buy a hen, which he caused to be brought from Syria, and for which he paid sixty pieces of gold. He sold it again at Cairo, for eight hundred pieces of gold, to the people whose business is to rear fowls. When the eggs appeared, they were bought for a piece of silver each:—afterwards two, three, and then four eggs might be had for that money; and this was the price which was sustained. A chicken sold for a hundred pieces of silver; and the price remained for a long time as high as a piece of gold, and more.—The ovens were heated with the wood taken from empty mansions. Those who had ovens bought a

mansion for a very low price, and used the partitions and the rafters, which served them for a time to heat their ovens: when this resource was exhausted, they bought another mansion. There were some among them who, regarding only the baseness of their feelings, got into the houses in the night, and took their provision of wood, without meeting anybody who could oppose their thievery.—It often happened that a mansion continued empty, nobody remaining there but the proprietor: and for want of finding any one who would purchase it, he himself took the joists, the doors and all the furniture, which he sold: and then he abandoned the dismantled place. The same was done with houses which were hired.—As for the villages round Cairo, and in the provinces, they are now merely a fearful solitude. One may travel for several days together, and in all directions, without meeting a single living creature;—nothing but corpses.—A great mortality and pestilence happened again in the Faioum, in the province of Garbiyyeh, and at Damietta and Alexandria. It was at the time of sowing that this scourge was at the worst; and there were instances where many labourers perished successively at the same plough. It was related to me how the cultivators who sowed the seed were not those who had prepared the land: and that again, it was a different set who gathered the harvest.—I myself saw the sowing done for one of the principal lords: he sent people to do it: then, having found that they were all dead, he sent others: and the greater part of these died also. This happened over and over again, in various districts.—Persons who may be relied on informed me that at Alexandria, on one

single Friday, the Imaum had uttered the funeral prayers over seven hundred bodies : and that the same inheritance had passed to fourteen heirs in succession in the course of a month : and also that above twenty thousand inhabitants of that city had left it, had retired to the province of Barka, had established themselves there, and had rendered that region flourishing."

On the 20th of May, "there happened a violent earthquake, which filled every one with terror. Every one leaped from his bed, and uttered cries of supplication to the all-powerful God. The movement remained a long time ; the shocks were like the motion of a sieve or riddle, or like that which a bird makes in flapping its wings. There were in all three violent shocks, which shook the buildings, made the doors rattle, and the rafters and roof tremble : and the dwellings which were in bad condition or in a lofty situation seemed doomed to destruction. There were more shocks towards noon of the same day ; but they were felt by few persons, because they were gentle and soon over. It had been extremely cold that night, so as to compel us to cover ourselves more warmly than usual : to this temperature succeeded the next day an extreme heat, and an excessive pestilential wind which intercepted respiration, and was positively suffocating. Such an earthquake as this is rarely known in Egypt. We afterwards learned by tidings which arrived from many quarters, that the earthquake was felt at the same hour in distant countries, and in villages a long way off. I consider it certain that at the same moment a great part of the world felt the shock, from Kous to Damietta, Alexandria, the coast of Syria, and indeed the whole of Syria,

in all its length and breadth. Many inhabited places disappeared altogether, without any trace whatever being left of them, and an innumerable multitude of people perished. I know of no place in all Syria which suffered less than Jerusalem: that city suffered very little damage. The ravages caused by this event were much greater in the countries inhabited by the Franks than in those occupied by the Mussulmans."

"The following fact is one of the most remarkable of all that I witnessed. Several persons among those who diligently visited me to confer with me on medicine, having got as far as the Treatise on Anatomy (of Galen) found it difficult to understand me, as I found it difficult to make myself understood by them, because there is a great difference between a verbal description and the inspection of the objects themselves. Having learned that there was at Maks a hill on which human remains had accumulated in great quantity, we went there; and we saw a mound of considerable extent composed of the remains of human bodies: there was more of them than of the soil: and we could reckon that there were twenty thousand corpses, and, more that could be perceived by the eye. They might be distinguished into different classes, according to age." And then he proceeds to give an anatomical lecture.

"When from a height we looked down," he continues, "upon the place called the Basin, and which is a considerable hollow, we saw skulls, some white, some black, and others of a deep brown: they were in layers, and heaped up in such a quantity that they covered up the other bones: one would have said that there were

only heads without bodies : and one might suppose that one saw melons which had been gathered, and which were thrown into a pile, as we heap sheaves upon a granary floor. Some days afterwards I saw them again : the sun had dried the flesh : the skulls had become white, and I compared them to ostriches' eggs piled together.—When I contemplated on the one hand the solitude which reigned in the streets and markets of Misr, and on the other these plains and hills which vomited corpses, I represented to myself a caravan which had quitted the spot where it had encamped, and had removed to another place. Moreover, this was not the only scene which offered such a spectacle : wherever one went the same scene was presented ; and often a much more frightful one.”

“ We will now briefly declare the state of the Nile for this year. The waters had considerably sunk in the month of January ; and they continued to sink till men and horses could pass the river by fording in several places. It was in Ramadhan that the river was at its lowest point : its bed was left dry, below Mikyas, to the distance of about eight hundred cubits. Ebn-Abi'braddad ascertained the height of the water at Mikyas on the 18th of June ; it was a cubit and a half ; whereas the year before it stood at two cubits on that day. Last year too the river had begun to rise on this day : but now we had to wait till the 19th of July. In all this interval, the river had risen only four digits ; so that there was a very bad opinion of the inundation for this year : the despair was general : people imagined that something extraordinary had happened to the sources of the Nile, and in the places through which it

passes. However, the river now began sensibly to rise ; so that at the end of Epiphi (July) its height was three cubits. At this time the waters ceased to rise for two days, which caused extreme terror ; because such a pause was contrary to ordinary experience. But soon after the waters came in great abundance : they rose by strides, and one might have said that mountains of water leaped upon one another. In the space of ten days, the river rose eight cubits, three of which were continuous, without any pause at all. On the 1st of September the greatest height was reached, which was one digit under sixteen cubits. After remaining for two days at this height, the waters began to decline slowly, and to flow away very gradually.

“ Here is what I had to say of the circumstances of the horrible scourge whose history I have narrated. I shall therefore finish here this section and the whole book.—Praise be to God, the Sovereign Master of the universe ! May God be favourable to the Prince of his messengers, to Mohammed the Prophet without learning, and to his holy and honourable descendants ! ”

Such was the dearth of the years A.D. 1199-1202. Such was the temporary victory gained by the pertinacious old Desert over the struggling Nile. The history suggests many thoughts ;—much admiration of the sagacity and administrative ability of Joseph in saving the Egyptian nation of his day from a fate as much worse even than the above related, as their numbers were greater in the ages of the national glory than ever afterwards. Much do we wonder, too, whether Joseph was guided by any precedent ; and how far by the prophecies of science. We should like

to know whether, as he grew up in his new country, he heard traditionary accounts of the horrors of drought in the valley ; and whether, in such a case, he applied himself to learn the premonitory signs of the calamity. Much do we wonder whether the ancient race was ever thus nearly swept away ; whether the priestly watchmen ever looked abroad from the top of their propyla over plains sown with human bones instead of sprouting seed, and whether they called together the few survivors to sacrifice to Osiris, to bring him back from his absence or displeasure to his favourite valley. Much should we like to know from what depth of ages the greatest of intermittent springs had regularly gushed forth, to give life to an expecting nation, waiting in hope along a line of two thousand miles. The priests who expressed to Herodotus such anxious fears for the Greeks, because of their dependence upon the clouds, could hardly have known of any such drought as could parallel that of A.D. 1200, or they would have moderated their boasting, even if they had concealed the fact. Among the few historical notices which remain appended by Manetho to the names of the kings, such as "During this reign" (first king of the Second Dynasty) "a great landslip took place at Bubastis, and many perished," I am not aware that any relate to a failure of the Nile ; or that there is anywhere a hint of even a tradition of such a famine as Abdallatif witnessed. It is probable that, in the days of high Egyptian civilisation, when Egypt was the granary of the world, better precautions were taken than by succeeding races of inhabitants. It seems more probable that men so able as that old Egyptian aristocracy should

have kept ample stores of food in reserve, than that the Nile should never have failed through several thousand years; or than that the memory of a great famine should have been lost in the time of Herodotus.

Here then we leave the Nile, which has been the thread of our discourse thus far. It has been before me, with all its antique interest, and all its fresh young beauty, during whatever I have written to this point; and I must hope that my readers have caught some sensations of that interest, and some glimpses of that beauty, as they have followed me. We shall see no more of it now, except as a mere line noticed from the citadel of Cairo, and as a mournful parting vision on the evening of our first encampment in the Desert.— And now, to Cairo!

CHAPTER XXI.

CAIRO.—STREETS AND BAZAARS.—MOSQUES.—CITADEL.—
FÊTE OF THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET.—ENTRANCE
OF THE MAHHMIL.—THE MAGICIAN.—SOCIETY IN
CAIRO.—MR. LANE.

THERE are fewer gayer things in life, for one who chooses to be gay, than a visit to Cairo. The stranger must use a few precautions against the disturbance of his gaiety ; and then he may surrender himself to the most wonderful and romantic dream that can ever meet his waking senses. The most wonderful and romantic,—because there is nothing so wonderful and romantic in the whole social world as an Arabian city : and Cairo is the queen of Arabian cities. Damascus is usually ranked with Cairo ; but, full of charms as Damascus is (as we may see by and by) it is charming for other reasons than its virtues as an Arabian city : on which ground it cannot for a moment stand a comparison with Cairo.—The precautions against seriousness which a stranger must take are, first, to forget that he is in Egypt ; to avoid looking over westwards to the Pyramids, or too far southwards, lest an array of old Egyptian ghosts should marshal themselves on the horizon, and cast a shadow of solemnity over his thoughts. He must also shake off any considerate

humanity which may hang about him, and avoid inquiring what lies beneath what he sees, or thinking of any people but those whom he meets in the bazaars. A butterfly may enjoy a glorious day in hovering about an array of flower-baskets, not caring whether the flowers are growing or stuck into wet sand: and the stranger in Cairo may have a short season of transport, if he will only take up with the shows of things, and forget the roots.

The mere spectacle of the streets I relished more and more to the last. As for the rest, I could not keep my heart and mind in abeyance for many days: and before I left, I felt that there is hardly a spot in what I have seen of the countries of the world where I would not rather live than in Cairo. The more I liked the Arabs, and the more I admired their gem of a city, the more impossible I felt it would be to live there, for any other reason than a strong call of duty.—The mere spectacle of the streets became, however, as I said, more bewitching every day.

After an early cup of coffee, we usually mounted our donkeys for a ride of two hours before the *table-d'hôte* breakfast. I like donkey-riding in Cairo. I never tried it out of Egypt, except for a few miles in Palestine: but I do not suppose it is the same thing anywhere else. The creatures are full of activity; and their amble is a pleasant pace in the streets. Side-saddles, more or less tattered, may be hired with Cairo donkeys now. Mrs. Y. took her saddle from England: and I was fortunate enough to buy one, in good repair, on my arrival at Cairo, which would serve for either horse or donkey. The little rogues of donkey-boys

were always ready and eager, close by the hotel,—hustling each other to get the preference,—one displaying his English with “God save the queen rosbif;” another smiling amiably in one’s face; and others kicking and cuffing, as people who had a prior right, and must relieve us of encroachers.—Then off we went briskly through the Ezbekeeych, under the acacias, past the water-carriers, with their full skins on their left shoulder, and the left hand holding the orifice of the neck, from which they could squirt water into the road, or quietly fill a jar at pleasure;—past the silent smoking party, with their long chibouques or serpentine nargeelehs;—past the barber, shaving the head of a man kneeling and resting his crown on the barber’s lap;—past the veiled woman with her tray of bread,—thin, round cakes;—past the red and white striped mosque, where we looked up to the gallery of the minaret, in hope of the muezzin coming out to call the men to prayer;—past a handsome house or two, with its rich lattices, its elaborate gateway, and its shade of trees in front, or of shrubs within the court, of which we might obtain a tempting glimpse;—past Shepherd’s hotel, where English gentlemen might be seen going in and out, or chatting before the door;—past a row of artisan dwellings, where the joiner, the weaver, and the maker of slippers were at work, with their oriental tools, and in their graceful Oriental postures;—and then into the bazaars. But before I had reached the bazaars, I was generally in a state of vexation with myself for my carelessness about surrounding objects. I hardly know what it is in these Eastern countries which disposes one to reverie: but I verily thought, the whole journey

through, and especially at Cairo, that I was losing my observing faculties,—so often had I to rouse myself, or to be roused by others, to heed what was before my eyes. I did not find it so on our route to Egypt, nor in crossing France on our return : so, my own experience would lead me to suppose that there is something in the aspect of Oriental life and scenery which meets and stimulates some of one's earliest and deepest associations, and engages some of one's higher mental faculties too much to leave the lower free. The conflict was not agreeable, however ;—the longing to have for one's own for ever every exquisite feature of the scene ; and presently, the discovery that one had passed through half a dozen alleys without seeing anything at all ;—and all for pondering something which might be as well thought over at home ! By dint of incessant self-flapping and endless rides, however, I arrived at last at knowing and remembering almost every peculiar object in Cairo ;—of such, I mean, as offer themselves to the eye in the streets.—I really do not know how I can convey my own impression of what I saw so well as in the words of my memoranda put down at the time. “ Cairo streets are wholly indescribable ; their narrowness, antiquity, sharp lights, and arcades of gloom, carved lattices, mat awnings, mixture of hubbub and fatalist quietude in the people, to whom loss of sight appears a matter of course ; the modes of buying and selling ;—all are in my mind, but cannot be set down.” Again. “ Went with my party to shop : a most amusing affair. I bought a Tuscan straw hat for 4*s.* 6*d.* while a common and not large saucepan, copper tinned, was priced 12*s.* It was awkward waiting while

Mr. E. bought brown shoes,—the way was so narrow, and our donkeys were five, and horses and laden camels were continually passing, thrusting us among the very merchandise: and then there was the smart and repeated crack of the courbash which gives warning that a carriage is coming, and that we must plunge into the nearest alley: and then there was a cart or two; and all the while there was some staring, though not much, and clouds of flies from a fruiterer's shop." The tranquil slowness with which the tradespeople (who all looked, to my eyes, like kings and princes in fairy tales) served any one of us gave all the rest many such opportunities of observation. One of the drollest incidents of this kind befel when the gentlemen were in search of some eastern garments for their desert ride. We ladies, with the aid of our dragoman, made our purchases, and returned to the tailor's,—stood, sat, inquired into the meaning of everything within sight, and wondered at the long delay. It ended in the amusement of finding that the gentlemen had obtained nothing but a lesson, and some practice in trying on eastern garments. After a world of effort, and of tying and hooking, and inquiring of prices, it came out that the clothes were second-hand: and they were pulled off much more quickly than they were put on.

Carriages are quite alarming in Cairo, which was not built for the passage of anything so large. They are very peremptory, having no idea of stopping for any body. Notice of their approach is given by the crack of the courbash of the outrider who precedes them; and any one who does not get out of the way on that signal must take the consequences. On comes the

vehicle, jolting and rocking, and filling the narrow way; and young and old, blind and seeing, must squeeze themselves up against the bazaar front; and a loaded camel must meet the shock as it may. It is worse, however, to ride in one than to meet it. In our drive to the harcem which we visited, we were kept in a continual agony, so many were the people we drove against. The keeping of carriages was much on the increase before there was any provision for them. A friend of mine found one in his street when he went to live there, four years and a half before my visit; and now there are twenty-four or twenty-five, making the passage of the street very hazardous. Since I left Cairo, a wide street has been begun, extending from the Ezbekeeych to the Citadel: a great convenience to the Pasha and the Franks, but a ruinous innovation upon the oriental appearance of the city. The Frank residents, however, now give up the orientalism of Cairo; and I was perpetually told by them that I was looking at a half-European city: but my own impression is that it is as like as possible to the pictures in the Arabian Nights: so that, of all the cities that I have seen, Cairo is the one which may be the most easily imagined at a distance, in a superficial way,—provided the notions of a mosque, a bazaar and an eastern house are once obtained from pictures. The one unimaginable circumstance is the atmosphere. No conception of the light, shade, and colour can be conveyed; and they are an hourly surprise to the stranger in Cairo, to the last.

The Mosques are extremely interesting: partly from their architectural beauty; more so from their purposes,

and the pleasure of seeing those purposes fulfilled. Nothing charmed me so much about them as the spectacle of the houseless poor, who find a refuge there. In the noble mosque of Sultaun Hasan, when we had mounted a long flight of steps from the street, and more stairs which led to the barrier where we must put on slippers, we entered a vast court, sacred to all who have hearts, whether they be heathens, Mohammedans, or Christians, for the solace and peace which are to be found there. The greater part of this court was open to the sky; its floor was of inlaid marble; and in the centre was the tank where the worshippers perform their ablutions before praying. The steps to the roofed platform at the upper end were matted; and on these steps some men were at prayer. On the platform sat a man making a garment,—spreading out his cloth upon the mat, and running the seams, as much at his ease as if he had been in a home of his own. This was a homeless man: and here he was welcome. Several poor people were sitting talking cheerfully: and under this roof, and on this mat, they were welcome to sleep, if they had no other place of rest. Some children were at play quietly on the marble pavement. We are accustomed to say that there is no respect of persons, and that all men are equal, within the walls of our churches: but I never felt this so strongly in any Christian place of worship as in this Mohammedan one, with its air of freedom, peace, and welcome to all the faithful. I felt myself an intruder there, in a retreat which should be kept sacred for those who go to it, not as a church, but as a religious home.—Still, good as it seems for the people to be there, and happy as appears the provision

for them, they are sighing, as people everywhere are always sighing, for the return of their golden age. This reverting propensity seems common to all men ; and every race seems to have had its golden age. Our dragoman pointed to a medallion in the interior, three feet in diameter, and told us that in Sultaun Hasan's time, "bread of the size of that was to be had for a para."—We reached this interior from the platform, through a magnificent portal of cast metal of beautiful pattern. In the centre of the vast chamber was the Sultaun's tomb, railed round. On the tomb lay a tattered, but very fine old copy of the Kurán ; and some Syrian lamps were beside it. The decorations of the walls and corners must once have been magnificent, some elaborate wood carving remaining which shows traces of gilding and colour. The best account of a mosque that I know is that of Mr. Milnes in his "Palm Leaves ;" a book, the value and beauty of which can be appreciated only during or after a visit to the East. As his poem of "the Mosque" may not have met the eye, or fixed the attention, of all my readers, I venture to give part of it here. Any one who is acquainted with it will not be sorry to fall in with it again :—

" A simple unpartitioned room,—
 Surmounted by an ample dome,
 Or, in some lands that favoured lie,
 With centre open to the sky,
 But roofed with arched cloisters round,
 That mark the consecrated bound,
 And shade the niche to Mekkeh turned,
 By which two massive lights are burned ;
 With pulpit whence the sacred word
 Expounded on great days is heard ;
 With fountains fresh, where, ere they pray,
 Men wash the soil of earth away ;

With shining minaret, thin and high,
From whose fine trelliced balcony,
Announcement of the hours of prayer
Is uttered to the silent air ;
Such is the Mosque—the holy place,
Where faithful men of every race,
Meet at their ease and face to face.

“ Not that the power of God is here
More manifest, or more to fear ;
Not that the glory of his face
Is circumscribed by any space ;
But that, as men are wont to meet
In court or chamber, mart or street,
For purposes of gain or pleasure,
For friendliness or social leisure,—
So for the greatest of all ends
To which intelligence extends,
The worship of the Lord, whose will
Created and sustains us still,
And honour of the Prophet's name,
By whom the saving message came,
Believers meet together here,
And hold these precincts very dear.

“ The floor is spread with matting neat,
Unstained by touch of shodden feet,—
A decent and delightful seat !
Where after due devotions paid,
And legal ordinance obeyed,
Men may in happy parlance join,
And gay with serious thought combine ;
May ask the news from lands away,
May fix the business of to-day ;
Or, with “ God willing,” at the close,
To-morrow's hopes and deeds dispose.

“ Children are running in and out,
With silver-sounding laugh and shout,
No more disturbed in their sweet play,
No more disturbing those that pray,
Than the poor birds that fluttering fly
Among the rafters there on high,
Or seek at times, with grateful hop,
The corn fresh-sprinkled on the top.

“ So, lest the stranger’s scornful eye
Should hurt this sacred family,—
Lest inconsiderate words should wound
Devout adorers with their sound,—
Lest careless feet should stain the floor
With dirt and dust from out the door,—
’Tis well that custom should protect
The place with prudence circumspect,
And let no unbeliever pass
The threshold of the faithful mass ;
That as each Muslim his Hareem
Guards even from a jealous dream,
So should no alien feeling scathe
This common home of public faith,
So should its very name dispel
The presence of the infidel.”

The Pasha’s new mosque at the citadel is a building magnificent for space, and in its position : and I hope he will see it finished before the time comes for him to be laid in it. It is a great enterprise ; and this mosque will henceforth be a striking feature to the stranger in the aspect of Cairo. But I must think the use of alabaster for the interior of the court a great mistake. However beautiful this veined alabaster is in small portions, its effect is not good in the mass. I never looked round that court without being reminded of dirty soap-suds. The streaky and mottled character of the alabaster utterly destroys the impression of grandeur which the architecture would otherwise give. And, what is worse, it is a crumbling material. Little kernels are falling out, and corners are broken off, and the sharpness of edges is gone already, before the work is half done. One might almost as well build a sculptured and pillared hall of chalk. The interior of this mosque is of vast dimensions, and must be truly imposing when finished.

It is from this eminence,—from the terrace of the citadel—that that view is obtained which is by some declared to be unsurpassed by any in the known world. On the whole, I prefer the view of Damascus from the Salaheeyeh to that of Cairo from the terrace of the citadel : but elsewhere I certainly should not know how to find a parallel for it.

I would entreat any stranger to see this view first in the evening,—before sunset. I saw it three times or more. In the morning there was much haze in the distance, and a sameness of colour which hurt the eye. At noon there was no colour at all : all colour being discharged in the middle of the day in Egypt, except in shady places. In the evening the beauty is beyond description. The vastness of the city, as it lies stretched below, surprises every one. It looks a perfect wilderness of flat roofs, cupolas, minarets, and palm tops, with an open space here and there, presenting the complete front of a mosque, and gay groups of people, and moving camels,—a relief to the eye, though so diminished by distance. The aqueduct is a most striking feature, running off for miles. The City of Tombs was beautiful and wonderful,—its fawn coloured domes rising against the somewhat darker sand of the desert. The river gleamed and wound away from the dim south into the blue distance of the north, the green strip of cultivation on its banks delighting the eye amidst the yellow sands. Over to the west, the Pyramids looked their full height, and their full distance, which is not the case from below. The platform of the Great Pyramid is here seen to be a considerable hill of itself ; and the fields and

causeways which intervene between it and the river lie as in a map, and indicate the true distance and elevation of these mighty monuments. The Lybian hills, dreary as possible, close in the view behind them, as the Mokuttam range does above and behind the citadel.—This view is the great sight of Cairo, and that which the stranger contrives to bring into his plan for almost every day.

Of course we saw the court where the Memlooks were slaughtered, and the wall whence Emin Bey took his leap, and the narrow street below, up which he fled. The wall must have been a good deal raised, even allowing for the rubbish heap which that day lay below; for its height above the street is now not less than eighty feet. No lapse of time or consideration of circumstances can soften one's feelings about that act of treacherous barbarity, or lessen one's compassion for the man who would purchase life and empire (supposing them to have been really in danger) at such a price. If any of my readers should be unaware of this deed of Mohammed Alee's, it may be soon learned.—He wanted to go into Arabia, to drive out the Wahabees who molested the pilgrims: but he was afraid to leave Egypt while the proud Memlooks remained, to accomplish some objects of theirs, adverse to him, in his absence. He invited the whole body of their leaders to the citadel, to witness a fête, treated them with the usual hospitalities, and dismissed them courteously. As the last went out, the doors were securely fastened; and when the guests, who had mounted their horses in the court, reached the gates, they found them closed, and nobody to answer their

call to have them opened. As they turned, to gallop back to the Pasha, a murderous fire was directed upon them from above. They could find no one; and they were surrounded by high walls. Men and horses lay heaped together in the agonies of death. Some fled round and round the court till the inevitable ball reached them: and more than one, in rage and agony at such a death being appointed to armed men in their martial strength, drove their heads against the stone walls, or shot out their own brains. One only escaped; —Emin Bey, who made his horse leap the parapet, alighted on a heap of rubbish in the street below, pushed his frantic horse to a gallop through the narrow streets, and took refuge with some Arabs, whose tents were about two miles from the city, and who concealed him till he could reach the sea, and quit the country. The Pasha employed his barbarous Greek soldiers to do this deed, and paid them by a license to plunder the houses of the Memlooks. The slaughter and ravage which ensued were so horrible that the Pasha himself had to parade the city on the second day, to put a stop to the pillage. The massacre took place on the 1st of March, 1811; and the number of Memlooks slain in the citadel is reported to be from 360 to 440. How many more of inferior rank were slain in the city, no one seems to know, the reports varying from 80 to 1200. Of course, the Memlook power was destroyed. The Pasha obtained his object with regard to that. But the memory of this deed interferes fatally with his other great object of being considered to have emancipated himself from the barbarism of the eastern world.

401 We saw his palace, in which there is nothing remarkable. His bath was yet warm; and his fine, uncomfortable, embroidered towel still wet. His gardener offered flowers to Mrs. Y. and me, in bouquets of a pyramidal form,—as carefully built up, in their way, as the pyramids themselves.

The fête of the Birth of the Prophet happened when we were at Cairo; and we went at noon to see what it was like. The best part of it was the appearance of the city that day, when the people were all dressed in their best; the men with clean turbans and bright purple tunics, and the ladies with gay silks under their floating balloon mantles of black silk. On the spot of the fête, the scene was not unlike that of a fair at home, except of course in regard to the dresses, and that the riders in the swings sat in the oriental fashion. There was a booth with dancing girls; a horrid sight, which we were glad to turn away from. So hideous a creature as the one who was dancing I never saw: the music was only the ordinary drum, or tom-tom, as it would be called further south in Africa: and the dancing is an observance which we could never understand,—there being neither grace, nor mirth, nor any other merit in it that we could perceive. Whenever we saw it, in this booth, in the harems, or on our deck, it appeared to us the same disagreeable and foolish wriggle, without activity of limb, or grace of attitude. The rest of the spectacle at this fête was merely swinging, and feeding at the stalls. The Arabs are fond of sucking the sugar-cane, which indeed I think very pleasant myself. We never rode through Cairo without meeting people thus enjoying themselves;

and during our voyage, the avidity of the crew, when they could contrive to land in a cane patch, was remarkable. Watchmen would come rushing down, to defend the canes; and we were made seriously uneasy sometimes by seeing what bundles our men carried away under their arms. If we remonstrated, we were told that they had paid for them. Perhaps they might; but I could never, by the sharpest watching, see the payment made: and I did see, now and then, that the country people were very angry.

Of course, the chief interest in these fêtes which we saw, and wherever many people were gathered together, was in observing their faces. The Arab face is very beautiful; and the expression has so much to do with it that the worst set of features is not ugly, as it would be elsewhere. One face, of which I saw a good deal, would appear hideous if drawn in profile, or presented in a cast,—with its outrageously thick lips, immense jaw and ugly nose: but I think of that face as almost beautiful. The brown complexion (which, in this case, precisely matched the owner's cinnamon-coloured vest) is a kind of veil to English eyes, softening down harshness of features: and then, there are the brilliant teeth, quite universally magnificent, and only injured by the strange practice I have mentioned—of drawing the teeth needful for biting cartridges:—and then, there are the beautiful eyes, soft, clear and intelligent; and the exquisite grace of carriage and gesture, set off to the utmost by the oriental dress. Among these advantages, the ugliness of particular features is almost lost: and the prevailing impression of the observer is that he sees beauty wherever he turns. The pathetic

expression of the Arab face, its softness and melancholy; the flowing dress, the slow movement, (in the absence of causes of disturbance,) give the impression of great dignity, it is true, but also of languor and delicacy: but the muscular strength of these pathetic Arabs is very great. It is not only that they can support fatigue and hunger in their journeys, and wrestle vigorously with an opponent, in one of the quarrels they are so fond of falling into:—they lift prodigious weights, and carry vast burdens in cool blood. We understood our dragoman's health not to be very good; and I certainly doubted his fitness for his office at first, when it was clear that his lungs were weak; but the daily proofs he gave of muscular strength would have surprised many a stout English servant.

As for accurate knowledge of the health and length of life of the Egyptians, there is none to be had. The distrust existing between the government and the people is a bar to the obtaining of any reliable information about any of their affairs; and the observations of a passing stranger can be worth little. My impression was that of travellers generally. I was surprised to see how dirty and unhealthy-looking children can grow into strong and well-formed men and women: and I was struck by the small proportion of sick that came under my notice throughout the country. On the whole, a stranger would be disposed to conclude that the poorer classes, whom the curse of polygamy scarcely reaches, must be in favourable circumstances in regard to health,—judging from the prevalence of muscular strength, of fine teeth, and of beauty of form and face. Among the richer classes, where a viler polygamy

prevails than in almost any country of the world, it is far otherwise.

We were so fortunate as to witness a much more imposing festival than that of the birth of the Prophet:—the return of the Mahhmil.

On the morning of Sunday, the 14th of January, the news flew through the city of the return of the Pilgrims from Mekkeh. This pilgrimage is always subject to so many hardships and dangers, so many lives and fortunes are concerned in it, and there is such an absence of news from the departure of the caravan till its return, that its re-appearance is always an occasion of great excitement: and this year the excitement was unusually strong, from the cholera having committed great ravages among the pilgrims. As soon as this fact was made known in the city by the first comers, early that Sunday morning, crowds poured out to meet the caravan;—crowds of people, each one of whom was in suspense about the life of some relation or friend. We were told by friends who happened to witness the meeting, that it was a very touching sight; and that the joy of some, and the dreadful wailing of others, were indeed quite overpowering. The report in the city throughout the day was that eight thousand out of thirty thousand had perished: but this was a great exaggeration, as we soon found. The caravan consisted of seventy thousand in the whole,—Cairo, that is, Egypt, sending out about thirty thousand of these. One-tenth of the whole, seven thousand, were carried off by cholera.

We rode, in the afternoon, to the encampment outside the walls. There was not much to see, the

pilgrims having naturally entered the city and gone home, instead of waiting to join the procession of the next morning. Out of the two thousand camels of the morning, we saw only about one hundred and fifty. The tents were to the last degree shabby and sordid-looking; and so were the machines,—the canopied-boxes—in which some of the women and children were carried on the backs of camels: but one likes to see the shabbiness which tells of the reality of such a pilgrimage. A governor of the expedition is appointed yearly: and here the governor with his attendants was sitting in his tawdry and faded green tent, smoking, and permitting the gaze of all who came. We saw how the beasts of the caravan are tethered at night, and observed a few groups of the pilgrims, eating or lounging, or tending their children; and that was all.

Accounts differed as to the time when the procession was to enter, the next morning. Alce had hired for us a shop-front in the Turkish bazaar; and there we were seated, by seven o'clock, I think, on a carpet, at the level of the peoples' shoulders;—in as good a place as could be had. While there, no insult whatever was offered us; and our presence seemed to excite very little notice, except among those who wanted baksheesh. Afterwards, when we were riding after the Mahmil to the citadel, and when the press of the crowd made the act a safe one, somebody spat a mouthful of chewed sugar-cane at me; and I received a smart slap in the face from a millet-stalk: and one or two other persons in the Frank group met with a similar insult. But the good behaviour on the whole

was wonderful, in comparison with former times. Baké Bey, the ruler of the affairs of the festival, had declared that any rudeness to Europeans should be severely punished.

We had not to wait long for the procession; and the interval was amusing enough. A pair of wrestlers came to show their prowess before us. Never had I imagined such wrestling. Their bodies, bare to the waist, were slippery with grease; and they took the greatest imaginable care not to hold one another too hard. They seemed to suppose each other made of pie-crust. They looked at each other with a sort of good-humoured threatening; shook their heads manfully; slipped their hands round one another's greasy arms; leaned their heads gently against one another's shoulders; strove to pant and be out of breath; and then turned to us for baksheesh. We had seen many a better match on the river-bank, when two of our crew had quarrelled about a bit of bread.

There were no pilgrims in the procession. They were gone home, or were entering the city more quickly and quietly by other gates. First, came music, loud and rude: and next, a company of foot-soldiers. Then, the governor of the caravan,—the Emir el Hadj, with his officers. Then the Mahhmil:—which is the sort of vehicle or tent in which a royal lady would ride on her camel, if she went on the pilgrimage. The origin of the custom of sending the Mahhmil is, as Mr. Lane tells us,* supposed to be that a royal lady did make the pilgrimage, in the thirteenth century, in such a vehicle; that her empty tent was dispatched with the

* Modern Egyptians, II. 182.

caravan for several years afterwards, as an emblem of royalty; and that Princes of other countries sent a similar emblem. Why it is now esteemed so sacred as it is, no one seems able to explain. The Mahhmil was, on this occasion, of square form, with a pyramidal top, surmounted by a gilt ball and crescent. Its covering was of dark purple brocade, richly embroidered, in gold, with various symbolical devices. It was carried by a tall, handsome, light-coloured camel, hung over with fringes and tassels, like the Mahhmil itself, and led by a proud driver, who was soon to yield up the rein to no less a personage than Abbas Pasha. This was the final task of the camel, which was never to work more.—Next came the only offensive object in the whole show,—the Sheikh of the camel. This was the old fanatic or knave who has attended the caravan for a quarter of a century, rolling his head all the way to Mekkeh and back, every year. I do not know whether he can now hold up his head: but if his brain is really disordered, I am sure it is no wonder. He was naked, except a little pair of old cotton trowsers; his hair grew bushy and wild; and, as he rolled about on his camel, he looked, of course, perfectly crazy. We were assured, however, that he is a rich and luxurious man, having one of the handsomest harems in Cairo, and another, no less enviable, at Mekkeh. This fellow is allowed by government two camels, and whatever he wants for the journey. He is keeper of the cats; about which cats we could learn nothing, except that an old woman used to carry a camel load of cats in pilgrimage; and we suppose the Sheikh of the camel has taken them in charge.

The next part of the procession interested me the most. The guard rode two and two. These soldiers were in shabby, sometimes tattered, clothing; which was their badge of honour. Their clothing testified to their activity and their hardships, during the three months that they had acted as escort to the expedition: and they were now going to the citadel, to receive new dresses. Several camels, adorned with little flags, small tufts of feathers, and housings embroidered with cowries, were among and behind these soldiers: and that was all.

Our asses were held in readiness for us to mount, and follow the procession to the citadel, which we did without difficulty, though the streets were crowded. We fell in with almost all the Frank travellers in Cairo, making a pretty large and very conspicuous group, and a curious rear-guard of the procession of the Mahhmil. It was here, when for an instant riding in single file, that I met with the insult I mentioned: and I really did not wonder at it; and could not resent it, putting myself in the place, for the moment, of a devout Mohammedan.

The finest part of the sight was now to come. In the midst of the vast area before the citadel, soldiers were drawn out in three sides of a square; music brayed; cannon were fired; and cavalry dashed about in the way which I had often read of, but had not, up to this moment, seen. Such horsemanship is really a great sight, as I afterwards occasionally felt in the Desert. It is no more like the best riding we see in England than the swiftest run of a greyhound is like the trot of a cat, or the flight of a swallow is like that

of a chicken. We have not room for Arabian riding in England, if we had all the other requisites. It is not every horseman who can get access to Salisbury plain, or a race-course, or a long stretch of hard and smooth sea-shore.—Amidst the noise of the cannon, the music, and the multitude, Abbas Pasha, the grandson of Mohammed Alee, took the rein of the camel of the Mahhmil, and led it hither and thither and away. It was a spirited and beautiful sight.

I have been so often asked since my return whether I saw the Magician at Cairo, that I suppose I had better say what I know about him, and what I saw him do.—Some gentlemen in our hotel (Hotel d'Orient) told us that they had engaged the Magician for the evening of this Monday, the 22d. It was permitted to our party, and to some other English in the hotel, to be present. The Magician did not come: and on being questioned the next morning, he excused himself on various grounds; but it plainly appeared at last that he was afraid to come;—afraid of being browbeaten and laughed at by the Franks, and of having his fee taken from him (he said) by the people in the inn-yard. He was promised civil treatment and earnest attention while with us, and special protection home after the *séance*. Moreover, an admirable interpreter was offered to us. Little reliance is to be placed on the interpretation of any dragoman in this case: and Mr. Lane's nephew, Stanley Poole, kindly offered to come and be tongue to both parties. Those who have the pleasure of knowing Mr. Lane's nephews know that wherever they are, there is security for good sense, cheerful kindness, and gentlemanly manners: and on this

occasion, my young friend Stanley appeared to satisfy the Magician as much as he pleased every body else.

All the experiments were failures ;—total and ludicrous failures: yet I am glad we saw the Magician ; because I have brought away a very clear and strong impression of the whole case : an impression which is shared by some who are qualified like myself to form a judgment upon it.

The Magician, who is rather a good-looking old gentleman, followed his usual and well-known method of preparing and burning charms and incense, and then summoned the Arab boy who had been brought by himself, or some one not of the English party. When the boy crouched down, close to the Magician and his pan of charcoal, the incense burning was so powerful that three of the English party were presently sound asleep ; and some others were drowsy. I, having no sense of smell, and being therefore unaffected by the perfumes, was wide awake, and closely on the watch. As soon as the old man had poured the ink into the boy's hand, and had his own left hand at liberty, he rested the tips of the fingers firmly on the crown of the boy's head, and kept them there. When asked why he did so, he replied that it was to hold the boy's head steady, that he might look fixedly into the ink ; but it was observable that he did not touch the head of the others afterwards brought in—nor mine, when I took their place. I saw in the boy that peculiar quivering of the eyelids which is one sign of the presence of mesmeric action.

One specimen of the failures will suffice. I was sitting opposite the boy when he was told to call and

look for Harriet Martineau. By degrees he spoke the name ;—saw nothing at first ; but presently said the person was visible. “What do you see ?”—“I see a young lady, dressed in black silk, walking in a garden, leading a little child by the hand.”—After a few more failures like this, he was sent away, and kept carefully apart till one of the gentlemen had brought in a boy picked up in the street. He, and another after him, succeeded no better.—By this time I had arrived at the conclusion which I now hold ;—that it is an affair of mesmerism, and that the Magician himself probably does not know it. If the truth were understood, I have no doubt it would appear that, in the first instance, a capital *clairvoyant* did see and tell the things declared, under the influence of the old man’s mesmeric power, and when there was accidentally a *rapport* established between the questioner and the boy. I am disposed to think that there was originally no imposture about the matter at all : that the Magician did not then understand the causes of his success, and does not now understand the causes of his failures. If he continues to take fees without hope of success, of course he is now an impostor : but if he believes that his success or failure depends on the pleasure of spirits whom he propitiates, he may be always hoping for success, and may think it wrong to refuse the chance. It is true, he is meantime taking money for what he does not perform, and is therefore fairly open to any extent of suspicion : but I do not see reason to suppose that it is a case of imposture from end to end. I wish a trial could be made by some one who understands what is known of Mesmerism. If a boy, proved to be

susceptible in the inferior degrees, could be subjected to the Magician's charms, and questioned, after being put *en rapport* with the questioner and the interpreter, I think it probable that he would succeed as well as the original oracle: or, if the first should not prove *clairvoyant*, a second, third, or fourth might. In my opinion, the experiment would be well worth trying where subjects could be had of a race probably so susceptible of the Mesmeric influence as the Arabs.

Seeing what I saw, and being myself a very good mesmeric subject, I asked one of my friends to tell the old man that I had seen curious things done in England, and knew the truth of such *clairvoyance* as he professed to show; and that I would take the boy's place. I knew he would refuse, and plead some good reasons against it: but I desired my friend to take no refusal. The old man presently said I might do as I liked; but he did not think it would succeed.—More charms and incense were burned, my hand was duly scored with ink, and the usual pool poured into the palm; and I faithfully gazed into it. In two minutes the sensation came, though there was no hand upon my head. The Magician is a powerful, and, no doubt, unconscious mesmeriser. Presently I began to see such odd things in the pool of ink,—it grew so large before my aching eyes, and showed such strange moving shadows and clear symmetrical figures and intersecting lines, that I felt uncertain how long I could command my thoughts and words; and, considering the number of strangers present, I thought it more prudent to shake off the influence while I could, than to pursue the experiment. The perfumes might have some effect, though I was

insensible to them; and so might the dead silence, and my steadfast gazing into the ink. But that there was also a strong mesmeric influence present, I am certain.

I hope it will not be long before some satisfactory course of mesmeric experiment, like that so triumphantly pursued by Dr. Esdaile in India, is instituted in Egypt, or at Jerusalem, with Arabs for subjects.

As far as our knowledge goes (which is but a little way, at present) it appears that the dark-skinned races,—as the Hindoos and the negroes,—are eminently susceptible; and it is a loss to science not to ascertain what they can do.—Nothing mortified me so much, in the course of my journey, as the being obliged to leave unused such an apparent opportunity of inquiry as I had while travelling among the Arabs: but in truth, I had no opportunity. We were always moving from place to place; there was no one who could help me;—and I needed all my own strength to meet the fatigues of travelling. I mesmerised a sick friend at Cairo, and found the exhaustion so great,—so unlike anything I ever experienced from mesmerising at home,—that I was warned to be prudent, for my party's sake even more than my own. But I wish some few of the many I met abroad who know the truth of mesmerism would unite to institute a course of experiments on Arab subjects. All the naval surgeons I met in the Mediterranean know the truth of Mesmerism as well as I do, and admit its importance: so do some eminent naval officers there; and the Physician of the French Embassy in Egypt; and the gentlemen from India who have witnessed what Dr. Esdaile and the Bengal

Government have done ; and Mr. Lane, and the Bishop of Jerusalem ; and, in short, every man of education, who has really attended to the subject. Among them, there are some who think most of the curative powers of Mesmerism ; but there are others who see how infinitely more important and interesting are those of its facts which belong to Mental philosophy, and who feel what an illustrious foreigner expressed to me, in London, not long ago : “it is a shame for your country that it should be behind every other civilised nation, in regard to this portion of science. It is strange that men should be slow to investigate a powerful curative means. But when the same agent shows that Man has a new faculty of the mind,—a faculty hitherto not numbered among his powers,—what can one say to indifference to such a discovery as that,—the greatest that Man has ever made, or can ever make ! It is a shame for your country !” If others of our countrymen abroad will follow Dr. Esdaile’s example in using their opportunities, they may yet redeem us from the disgrace we lie under with the educated classes of every country in Europe, for our want of a true philosophical spirit of inquiry and teachableness in regard to the facts of Mesmerism. However, we are wiser than we were a few years ago : and it is now a rare thing, I believe, to meet an educated person who does not regard the subject with seriousness and candour, and, after inquiry, with undoubting belief to a greater or less extent.

Cairo is indeed a pleasant place to spend a few weeks in, at the season of the year when we were there. Besides the delightful temperature, and its Arabian wonders and beauties, there is some agreeable society.

The Hotel d'Orient and Shepherd's Hotel were quite full during our stay: and I believe there is seldom a time when many English do not meet at Cairo,—some coming from home on their way to India, or for travelling objects, and others arriving from India for health or holiday. Then, there are the European Legations, with their hospitalities and agreeable society. And the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Lieder of the Prussian Mission is known to every body who has needed a welcome, or aid, or guidance in that strange city, so far from home. There is another privilege, accessible to few, but of inestimable value to the traveller in Egypt, which I was permitted to enjoy;—intercourse with Mr. Lane and his family. There is no need for me, or any one, at this time of day, to say anything of Mr. Lane personally. His opinions and character have long taken their rank;—a rank so high that it is a sort of impertinence for a passing traveller to present them. But I have been so often asked since my return home what it is exactly that Mr. Lane is about at Cairo, and it concerns the best classes of Englishmen so much to know exactly what Mr. Lane is about at Cairo, that I certainly ought to tell, as far as I am capable, how I found him occupied.

Every body knows Mr. Lane's reputation for Arabic scholarship; but too few know the generosity with which he has devoted himself to the interests of scholarship, to the injury of his private fortunes, and the sacrifice, for some years, of home and country. We are, happily, never without examples of generosity before our eyes;—the generosity of men of honour, the generosity of the poor, and of the philanthropic:

and men of science and literature have never been behind others in sacrificing their means, whether of money, time, health, or domestic ease, to the cause of knowledge and human improvement. Among these public benefactors is Mr. Lane; and I wish the nature and extent of his labours and sacrifices were better known than they are. One gentleman has shown his sense of the public obligations to Mr. Lane;—has shown that sense in the best possible way;—by aiding Mr. Lane's object. The present Duke of Northumberland, when Lord Prudhoe, saw at once that Mr. Lane's object was one of vast importance, and that no time must be lost in accomplishing it; and he acted accordingly. It is owing to him that the work has advanced so far as that we may hope for its completion in, I believe, two years.

It is well known to oriental scholars that no good Arabic Lexicon exists: and perhaps none but men of learning can fully understand how important it is to the world that it should have a good Arabic Lexicon: but it is evident enough to ordinary people that it is of consequence to our knowledge of history and ancient literature to have as good a key as can be found to the treasures of Arabic literature. There are, in the Mosques of Cairo, materials essential to the formation of a perfect Lexicon which can be had nowhere else: these MSS. are crumbling to pieces so fast that, if not used now, they will be lost for ever; and Mr. Lane is the only competent man who has access to these materials. He saw the importance of the object, felt the pressure of the time, knew that he was the man for the work, and therefore devoted himself to it, in a generous

negligence of his personal interests. He gave up a good literary income in London, the comforts of an English home, and the society of family and friends, and went to live at Cairo, working, to the injury of his health, at an unremunerative labour which he well knew the world would be slow to appreciate. And there he toils, day by day, with his sheikh, poring over the old MSS. which can scarcely be touched without falling to pieces. And there he must toil for two years more, till his work is finished.—And what next? How will our Universities, and the Government, and the India Company show that they understand the boon which Mr. Lane has conferred upon them? The common notion of welcoming a book is, taking a single copy; or five, or ten copies. Is this what will be done in the case of this rare book, which it is certain the public will never buy? One of the European powers understands the matter better than this;—understands too that tokens of appreciation should be given so timely as that they may cheer the toils of the labourer, and assure him that he is not working in vain. The King of Prussia has been first, as usual, to give encouragement. Since my return, I find that he has sent a commissioner to Egypt, by way of London, to make arrangements for the establishment and diffusion of the work. I rejoice at this: but I feel some shame that a foreign government should first have the honour,—after the Duke of Northumberland—of welcoming and fostering the work of an English scholar.

In thinking of Mr. Lane's household, and the happy hours I spent among them, it occurs to me to mention thus publicly (what it would certainly never occur to

Mr. Lane and his family that I should mention in relation to them) the idea that struck me there, and many times since,—what a pity it is that such lads as his nephews are not looked to to occupy some such public offices in the East as are at present filled imperfectly from the imperfect oriental education of English youths at home. Here is Stanley Poole,—well educated as an English youth, and trained in a virtuous and religious English home in the heart of the East,—fit, at the same time, to live among the people of the East all his days;—speaking their languages like his mother tongue, seasoned to their climate, habituated to their ways, and familiar with their minds:—what a waste it will be if such a youth should be destined to any occupation in life which might as well be discharged by any other good and clever and accomplished Englishman, when there is such a want of well qualified diplomatic and consular agents, and (what is more important still) scientific travellers who can make their way freely, and use fully their opportunities in the East! While we keep at work such expensive arrangements as we have at home for the preparation of oriental officers and agents, what a pity it seems not to use the rare chance, when it presents itself, of securing the services of promising youths in whom are united the advantages of an English and an Eastern education! I say this wholly of my own accord, and without consultation with any one: and I shall be very glad if I find that any one who can act in the matter is of my opinion.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HAREEM.

I SAW two Hareems in the East; and it would be wrong to pass them over in an account of my travels; though the subject is as little agreeable as any I can have to treat. I cannot now think of the two mornings thus employed without a heaviness of heart greater than I have ever brought away from Deaf and Dumb Schools, Lunatic Asylums, or even Prisons. As such are my impressions of hareems, of course I shall not say whose they were that I visited. Suffice it that one was at Cairo and the other at Damascus.

The royal hareems were not accessible while I was in Egypt. The Pasha's eldest daughter, the widow of Defterdar Bey, was under her father's displeasure, and was, in fact, a prisoner in her own house. While her father did not visit her, no one else could: and while she was secluded, her younger sister could not receive visitors: and thus, their hareems were closed.—The one which I saw was that of a gentleman of high rank; and as good a specimen as could be seen. The misfortune was that there was a mistake about the presence of an interpreter. A lady was to have met us who spoke Italian or French: but she did not arrive; and the morning therefore passed in dumb show: and we could

not repeat our visit on a subsequent day, as we were invited to do. We lamented this much at the time : but our subsequent experience of what is to be learned in a hareem with the aid of an intelligent and kind interpreters convinced us that we had not lost much.

Before I went abroad, more than one sensible friend had warned me to leave behind as many prejudices as possible ; and especially on this subject, on which the prejudices of Europeans are the strongest. I was reminded of the wide extent, both of time and space, in which Polygamy had existed ; and that openness of mind was as necessary to the accurate observation of this institution as of every other. I had really taken this advice to heart : I had been struck by the view taken by Mr. Milnes in his beautiful poem of "the Hareem ;" and I am sure I did meet this subject with every desire to investigate the ideas and general feelings involved in it. I learned a very great deal about the working of the institution ; and I believe I apprehend the thoughts and feelings of the persons concerned in it : and I declare that if we are to look for a hell upon earth, it is where polygamy exists : and that, as polygamy runs riot in Egypt, Egypt is the lowest depth of this hell. I always before believed that every arrangement and prevalent practice had some one fair side,—some one redeeming quality : and diligently did I look for this fair side in regard to polygamy : but there is none. The longer one studies the subject, and the deeper one penetrates into it,—the more is one's mind confounded with the intricacy of its iniquity, and the more does one's heart feel as if it would break.

I shall say but little of what I know. If there were

the slightest chance of doing any good, I would speak out at all hazards ;—I would meet all the danger, and endure all the disgust. But there is no reaching the minds of any who live under the accursed system. It is a system which belongs to a totally different region of ideas from ours : and there is nothing to appeal to in the minds of those who, knowing the facts of the institution, can endure it : and at home, no one needs appealing to and convincing. Any plea for liberality that we meet at home proceeds from some poetical fancy, or some laudable desire for impartiality in the absence of knowledge of the facts. Such pleas are not operative enough to render it worth while to shock and sadden many hearts by statements which no one should be required needlessly to endure. I will tell only something of what I saw ; and but little of what I thought and know.

At ten o'clock, one morning, Mrs. Y. and I were home from our early ride, and dressed for our visit to a hareem of a high order. The lady to whose kindness we mainly owed this opportunity, accompanied us, with her daughter. We had a disagreeable drive in the carriage belonging to the hotel, knocking against asses, horses and people all the way. We alighted at the entrance of a paved passage leading to a court which we crossed : and then, in a second court, we were before the entrance of the hareem.

A party of eunuchs stood before a faded curtain, which they held aside when the gentlemen of our party and the dragoman had gone forward. Retired some way behind the curtain stood, in a half circle, eight or ten slave girls, in an attitude of deep obeisance. Two

of them then took charge of each of us, holding us by the arms above the elbows, to help us upstairs.—After crossing a lobby at the top of the stairs, we entered a handsome apartment, where lay the chief wife,—at that time an invalid.—The ceiling was gaily painted; and so were the walls,—the latter with curiously bad attempts at domestic perspective. There were four handsome mirrors; and the curtains in the doorway were of a beautiful shawl fabric, fringed and tasselled. A Turkey carpet not only covered the whole floor, but was turned up at the corners. Decwáns extended round nearly the whole room,—a lower one for ordinary use, and a high one for the seat of honour. The windows, which had a sufficient fence of blinds, looked upon a pretty garden, where I saw orange trees and many others, and the fences were hung with rich creepers.

On cushions on the floor lay the chief lady, ill and miserable-looking. She rose as we entered; but we made her lie down again: and she was then covered with a silk counterpane. Her dress was, as we saw when she rose, loose trowsers of blue striped cotton under her black silk jacket: and the same blue cotton appeared at the wrists, under her black sleeves. Her headdress was of black net, bunched out curiously behind. Her hair was braided down the sides of this headdress behind, and the ends were pinned over her forehead. Some of the black net was brought round her face, and under the chin, showing the outline of a face which had no beauty in it, nor traces of former beauty, but which was interesting to-day from her manifest illness and unhappiness. There was a strong expression of way-

wardness and peevishness about the mouth, however. She wore two handsome diamond rings ; and she and one other lady had watches and gold chains. She complained of her head ; and her left hand was bound up : she made signs by pressing her bosom, and imitating the dandling of a baby, which, with her occasional tears, persuaded my companions that she had met with some accident and had lost her infant. On leaving the hareem, we found that it was not a child of her own that she was mourning, but that of a white girl in the hareem : and that the wife's illness was wholly from grief for the loss of this baby ;—a curious illustration of the feelings and manners of the place ! The children born in large hareems are extremely few : and they are usually idolised, and sometimes murdered. It is known that in the houses at home which morally most resemble these hareems (though little enough externally) when the rare event of the birth of a child happens, a passionate joy extends over the wretched household :—jars are quieted, drunkenness is moderated, and there is no self-denial which the poor creatures will not undergo during this gratification of their feminine instincts. They will nurse the child all night in illness, and pamper it all day with sweetmeats and toys ; they will fight for the possession of it, and be almost heart-broken at its loss : and lose it they must ; for the child always dies,—killed with kindness, even if born healthy. This natural outbreak of feminine instinct takes place in the too populous hareem, when a child is given to any one of the many who are longing for the gift : and if it dies naturally, it is mourned as we saw through a wonderful conquest of personal jealousy by this general

instinct. But when the jealousy is uppermost,—what happens then?—why, the strangling the innocent in its sleep,—or the letting it slip from the window into the river below,—or the mixing poison with its food ; —the mother and the murderess, always rivals and now fiends, being shut up together for life. If the child lives, what then? If a girl, she sees before her from the beginning the nothingness of external life, and the chaos of interior existence, in which she is to dwell for life. If a boy, he remains among the women till ten years old, seeing things when the eunuchs come in to romp, and hearing things among the chatter of the ignorant women which brutalise him for life before the age of rationality comes. But I will not dwell on these hopeless miseries.

A sensible looking old lady, who had lost an eye, sat at the head of the invalid : and a nun-like elderly woman, whose head and throat were wrapped in unstarched muslin, sat behind for a time, and then went away, after an affectionate salutation to the invalid.—Towards the end of the visit, the husband's mother came in,—looking like a little old man in her coat trimmed with fur. Her countenance was cheerful and pleasant. We saw, I think, about twenty more women,—some slaves,—most or all young—some good-looking, but none handsome. Some few were black ; and the rest very light :—Nubians or Abyssinians and Circassians, no doubt. One of the best figures, as a picture, in the hareem, was a Nubian girl, in an amber-coloured watered silk, embroidered with black, looped up in festoons, and finished with a black boddice. The richness of the gay printed cotton skirts and sleeves

surprised us: the finest shawls could hardly have looked better. One graceful girl had her pretty figure well shown by a tight-fitting black dress. Their heads were dressed much like the chief lady's. Two, who must have been sisters, if not twins, had patches between the eyes. One handmaid was barefoot, and several were without shoes. Though there were none of the whole large number who could be called particularly pretty individually, the scene was, on the whole, exceedingly striking, as the realisation of what one knew before, but as in a dream. The girls went out and came in, but, for the most part, stood in a half circle. Two sat on their heels for a time: and some went to play in the neighbouring apartments.

Coffee was handed to us twice, with all the well-known apparatus of jewelled cups, embroidered tray cover, and gold-flowered napkins. There were chibouques, of course: and sherbets in cut glass cups. The time was passed in attempts to have conversation by signs; attempts which are fruitless among people of the different ideas which belong to different races. How much they made out about us, we do not know: but they inquired into the mutual relationships of the party, and put the extraordinary questions which are always put to ladies who visit the hareems.—A young lady of my acquaintance, of the age of eighteen, but looking younger, went with her mother to a hareem in Cairo (not the one I have been describing) and excited great amazement when obliged to confess that she had not either children or a husband. One of the wives threw her arms about her, intreated her to stay for ever, said she should have any husband she liked, but

particularly recommended her own, saying that she was sure he would soon wish for another wife, and she had so much rather it should be my young friend, who would amuse her continually, than anybody else that she could not be so fond of. Everywhere they pitied us European women heartily, that we had to go about travelling, and appearing in the streets without being properly taken care of,—that is watched. They think us strangely neglected in being left so free, and boast of their spy system and imprisonment as tokens of the value in which they are held.

The mourning worn by the lady who went with us was the subject of much speculation: and many questions were asked about her home and family. To appease the curiosity about her home, she gave her card. As I anticipated, this did not answer. It was the great puzzle of the whole interview. At first the poor lady thought it was to do her head good: then, she fidgetted about it, in the evident fear of omitting some observance: but at last, she understood that she was to keep it. When we had taken our departure, however, a eunuch was sent after us to inquire of the dragoman what “the letter” was which our companion had given to the lady.

The difficulty is to get away, when one is visiting a harem. The poor ladies cannot conceive of one's having anything to do; and the only reason they can understand for the interview coming to an end is the arrival of sunset, after which it would, they think, be improper for any woman to be abroad. And the amusement to them of such a visit is so great that they protract it to the utmost, even in such a case as ours

to-day, when all intercourse was conducted by dumb show. It is certainly very tiresome; and the only wonder is that the hostesses can like it. To sit hour after hour on the deewán, without any exchange of ideas, having our clothes examined, and being plied with successive cups of coffee and sherbet, and pipes, and being gazed at by a half-circle of girls in brocade and shawls, and made to sit down again as soon as one attempts to rise, is as wearisome an experience as one meets with in foreign lands.—The weariness of heart is, however, the worst part of it. I noted all the faces well during our constrained stay; and I saw no trace of mind in any one except in the homely one-eyed old lady. All the younger ones were dull, soulless, brutish, or peevish. How should it be otherwise, when the only idea of their whole lives is that which, with all our interests and engagements, we consider too prominent with us? There cannot be a woman of them all who is not dwarfed and withered in mind and soul by being kept wholly engrossed with that one interest,—detained at that stage in existence which, though most important in its place, is so as a means to ulterior ends. The ignorance is fearful enough; but the grossness is revolting.

At the third move, and when it was by some means understood that we were waited for, we were permitted to go,—after a visit of above two hours. The sick lady rose from her cushions, notwithstanding our opposition, and we were conducted forth with much observance. On each side of the curtain which overhung the outer entrance stood a girl with a bottle of rose water, some of which was splashed in our faces as we passed out.

We had reached the carriage when we were called back :—his Excellency was waiting for us. So we visited him in a pretty apartment, paved with variegated marbles, and with a fountain in the centre. His Excellency was a sensible-looking man, with a pleasant, easy, and graceful manners. He lamented the mistake about the interpreter, and said we must go again, when we might have conversation. He insisted upon attending us to the carriage, actually passing between the files of beggars which lined the outer passage. The dragoman was so excessively shocked by this degree of condescension, that we felt obliged to be so too, and remonstrated ; but in vain. He stood till the door was shut, and the whip was cracked. He is a liberal-minded man ; and his hareem is nearly as favourable a specimen as could be selected for a visit ; but what is this best specimen ? I find these words written down on the same day, in my journal : written, as I well remember, in heaviness of heart. “ I am glad of the opportunity of seeing a hareem : but it leaves an impression of discontent and uneasiness which I shall be glad to sleep off. And I am not conscious that there is prejudice in this. I feel that a visit to the worst room in the Rookery in St. Giles’s would have affected me less painfully. There are there at least the elements of a rational life, however perverted ; while here humanity is wholly and hopelessly baulked. It will never do to look on this as a case for cosmopolitan philosophy to regard complacently, and require a good construction for. It is not a phase of natural early manners. It is as pure a conventionalism as our representative monarchy, or German heraldry, or Hindoo caste ; and the most atrocious in the world.”

And of this atrocious system, Egypt is the most atrocious example. It has unequalled facilities for the importation of black and white slaves; and these facilities are pushed to the utmost; yet the population is incessantly in the decline. But for the importation of slaves, the upper classes, where polygamy runs riot, must soon die out,—so few are the children born, and so fatal to health are the arrangements of society. The finest children are those born of Circassian or Georgian mothers; and but for these, we should soon hear little more of an upper class in Egypt.—Large numbers are brought from the south,—the girls to be made attendants or concubines in the hareem, and the boys to be made, in a vast proportion, those guards to the female part of the establishment whose mere presence is a perpetual insult and shame to humanity. The business of keeping up the supply of these miserable wretches,—of whom the Pasha's eldest daughter has fifty for her exclusive service,—is in the hands of the Christians of Asyoot. It is these Christians who provide a sufficient supply, and cause a sufficient mortality to keep the number of the sexes pretty equal: in consideration of which we cannot much wonder that Christianity does not appear very venerable in the eyes of Mohammedans.

These eunuchs are indulged in regard to dress, personal liberty, and often the possession of office, domestic, military, or political. When retained as guards of the hareem, they are in their master's confidence,—acting as his spies, and indispensable to the ladies, as a medium of communication with the world, and as furnishing their amusements,—being at once

playmates and servants. It is no unusual thing for the eunuchs to whip the ladies away from a window, whence they had hoped for amusement; or to call them opprobrious names; or to inform against them to their owner: and it is also no unusual thing for them to romp with the ladies, to obtain their confidence, and to try their dispositions. Cases have been known of one of them becoming the friend of some poor girl of higher nature and tendencies than her companions; and even of a closer attachment, which is not objected to by the proprietor of both. It is a case too high for his jealousy, so long as he knows that the cage is secure. It has become rather the fashion to extenuate the lot of the captive of either sex: to point out how the Nubian girl, who would have ground corn and woven garments, and nursed her infants in comparative poverty all her days, is now surrounded by luxury, and provided for for life: and how the Circassian girl may become a wife of the son of her proprietor, and hold a high rank in the harem: and how the wretched brothers of these slaves may rise to posts of military command or political confidence; but it is enough to see them to be disabused of all impressions of their good fortune. It is enough to see the dull and gross face of the handmaid of the hareem, and to remember at the moment the cheerful, modest countenance of the Nubian girl busy about her household tasks, or of the Nubian mother, with her infants hanging about her as she looks, with face open to the sky, for her husband's return from the field, or meets him on the river bank. It is enough to observe the wretched health and abject, or worn, or insolent look

of the guard of the hareem, and to remember that he ought to have been the head of a household of his own, however humble: and in this contrast of what is with what ought to have been, slavery is seen to be fully as detestable here as anywhere else. These two hellish practices, slavery and polygamy, which, as practices, can clearly never be separated, are here avowedly connected; and in that connexion, are exalted into a double institution, whose working is such as to make one almost wish that the Nile would rise to cover the tops of the hills, and sweep away the whole abomination. Till this happens, there is, in the condition of Egypt, a fearful warning before the eyes of all men. The Egyptians laugh at the marriage arrangements of Europe, declaring that virtual polygamy exists everywhere, and is not improved by hypocritical concealment. The European may see, when startled by the state of Egypt, that virtual slavery is indispensably required by the practice of polygamy; virtual proprietorship of the women involved, without the obligations imposed by actual proprietorship; and cruel oppression of the men who should have been the husbands of these women. And again, the Carolina planter, who knows as well as any Egyptian that polygamy is a natural concomitant of slavery, may see in the state of Egypt and the Egyptians what his country and his children must come to, if either of those vile arrangements is permitted which necessitates the other.

It is scarcely needful to say that those benevolent persons are mistaken who believe that Slavery in Egypt has been abolished by the Pasha, and the importation of slaves effectually prohibited. Neither the Pasha nor

any other human power can abolish slavery while Polygamy is an institution of the country, the proportion of the sexes remaining in Egypt what it is, there and everywhere else.

The reason assigned by Montesquieu for polygamy throughout the East has no doubt something in it:—that women become so early marriageable that the wife cannot satisfy the needs of the husband's mind and heart: and that therefore he must have both a bride and a companion of whom he may make a friend. How little there is in this to excuse the polygamy of Egypt may be seen by an observation of the state of things there and in Turkey, where the same religion and natural laws prevail as in Egypt. In Egypt, the difficulty would be great of finding a wife of any age who could be the friend of a man of any sense: and in Turkey, where the wives are of a far higher order, polygamy is rare, and women are not married so young. It is not usual there to find such disparity of years as one finds in Egypt between the husband and his youngest wife. The cause assigned by Montesquieu is true in connexion with a vicious state of society: but it is not insuperable, and it will operate only as long as it is wished for. If any influence could exalt the ideas of marriage, and improve the training of women in Egypt, it would soon be seen that men would prefer marrying women of nearly their own age, and would naturally remain comparatively constant: but before this experiment can be tried, parents must have ceased to become restless when their daughter reaches eleven years old, and afraid of disgrace if she remains unmarried long after that.

I was told, while at Cairo, of one extraordinary family where there is not only rational intercourse and confidence at home, and some relaxation of imprisonment, but the young ladies read !—and read French and Italian ! I asked what would be the end of this : and my informant replied that whether the young ladies married or not, they would sooner or later sink down, he thought, into a state even less contented than the ordinary. There could be no sufficient inducement for secluded girls, who never saw anybody wiser than themselves, to go on reading French and Italian books within a certain range. For want of stimulus and sympathy, they would stop ; and then, finding themselves dissatisfied among the nothings which fill the life of other women, they would be very unhappy. The exceptional persons under a bad state of things, and the beginners under an improving system must ever be sufferers,—martyrs of their particular reformation. To this they may object less than others would for them, if they are conscious of the personal honour and general blessing of their martyrdom.

The youngest wife I ever saw (except the swathed and veiled brides we encountered in the streets of Egyptian cities) was in a Turkish hareem which Mrs. Y. and I visited at Damascus. I will tell that story now, that I may dismiss the subject of this chapter. I heartily dreaded this second visit to a hareem, and braced myself up to it as one does to an hour at the dentist's, or to an expedition into the City to prove a debt. We had the comfort of a good and pleasant interpreter ; and there was more mirth and nonsense than in the Cairo hareem ; and therefore somewhat less

disgust and constraint: but still it was painful enough. We saw the seven wives of three gentlemen, and a crowd of attendants and visitors. Of the seven, two had been the wives of the head of the household, who was dead: three were the wives of his eldest son, aged twenty-two; and the remaining two were the wives of his second son, aged fifteen. The youngest son, aged thirteen, was not yet married; but he would be thinking about it soon.—The pair of widows were elderly women, as merry as girls, and quite at their ease. Of the other five, three were sisters:—that is, we conclude, half-sisters;—children of different mothers in the same hareem. It is evident at a glance what a tragedy lies under this; what the horrors of jealousy must be among sisters thus connected for life;—three of them between two husbands in the same house! And we were told that the jealousy had begun, young as they were, and the third having been married only a week.—This young creature, aged twelve, was the bride of the husband of fifteen. She was the most conspicuous person in the place, not only for the splendour of her dress, but because she sat on the *deewán*, while the others sat or lounged on cushions on the raised floor. The moment we took our seats I was struck with compassion for this child,—she looked so grave, and sad and timid. While the others romped and giggled, pushing and pulling one another about, and laughing at jokes among themselves, she never smiled, but looked on listlessly. I was determined to make her laugh before we went away; and at last she relaxed somewhat,—smiling, and growing grave again in a moment: but at length she really and truly

laughed ; and when we were shown the whole hareem, she also slipped her bare and dyed feet into her pattens inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and went into the courts with us, nestling to us, and seeming to lose the sense of her new position for the time : but there was far less of the gaiety of a child about her than in the elderly widows. Her dress was superb ;—a full skirt and boddice of geranium-coloured brocade, embossed with gold flowers and leaves ; and her frill and ruffles were of geranium-coloured gauze. Her eyebrows were frightful,—joined and prolonged by black paint. Her head was covered with a silk net, in almost every mesh of which were stuck jewels or natural flowers : so that her head was like a bouquet sprinkled with diamonds. Her nails were dyed black ; and her feet were dyed black in chequers. Her complexion, called white, was of an unhealthy yellow : and indeed we did not see a healthy complexion among the whole company ; nor anywhere among women who were secluded from exercise, while pampered with all the luxuries of eastern living.

Besides the seven wives, a number of attendants came in to look at us, and serve the pipes and sherbet ; and a few ladies from a neighbouring hareem ; and a party of Jewesses, with whom we had some previous acquaintance. Mrs. Y. was compelled to withdraw her lace veil, and then to take off her bonnet : and she was instructed that the street was the place for her to wear her veil down, and that they expected to see her face. Then her bonnet went round, and was tried on many heads,—one merry girl wearing it long enough to surprise many new comers with the joke.—My gloves were stretched and pulled all manner of ways, in their

attempts to thrust their large, broad brown hands into them, one after another. But the great amusement was my trumpet. The eldest widow, who sat next me, asked for it, and put it to her ear; when I said "Bo!" When she had done laughing, she put it into her next neighbour's ear, and said "Bo!" and in this way it came round to me again. But in two minutes, it was asked for again, and went round a second time,—every body laughing as loud as ever at each "Bo!"—and then a third time! Could one have conceived it!—The next joke was on behalf of the Jewesses, four or five of whom sat in a row on the *deewán*. Almost everybody else was puffing away at a *chibouque* or a *uargeeleh*, and the place was one cloud of smoke. The poor Jewesses were obliged to decline joining us; for it happened to be Saturday: they must not smoke on the sabbath. They were naturally much pitied: and some of the young wives did what was possible for them. Drawing in a long breath of smoke, they puffed it forth in the faces of the Jewesses, who opened mouth and nostrils eagerly to receive it. Thus was the sabbath observed, to shouts of laughter.

A pretty little blue-eyed girl of seven was the only child we saw. She nestled against her mother; and the mother clasped her closely, lest we should carry her off to London. She begged we would not wish to take her child to London, and said she "would not sell her for much money."—One of the wives was pointed out to us as particularly happy in the prospect of becoming a mother; and we were taken to see the room in which she was to lie in, which was all in readiness, though the event was not looked for for more than half a year.

She was in the gayest spirits, and sang and danced. While she was lounging on her cushions, I thought her the handsomest and most graceful, as well as the happiest, of the party : but when she rose to dance, the charm was destroyed for ever. The dancing is utterly disgusting. A pretty Jewess of twelve years old danced, much in the same way ; but with downcast eyes and an air of modesty. While the dancing went on, and the smoking, and drinking coffee and sherbet, and the singing, to the accompaniment of a tambourine, some hideous old hags came in successively, looked and laughed, and went away again. Some negresses made a good back ground to this thoroughly Eastern picture. All the while, romping, kissing and screaming went on among the ladies, old and young. At first, I thought them a perfect rabble ; but when I recovered myself a little, I saw that there was some sense in the faces of the elderly women.—In the midst of all this fun, the interpretess assured us that “there is much jealousy every day ;” jealousy of the favoured wife ; that is, in this case, of the one who was pointed out to us by her companions as so eminently happy, and with whom they were romping and kissing, as with the rest. Poor thing ! even the happiness of these her best days is hollow : for she cannot have, at the same time, peace in the hareem and her husband’s love.

They were so free in their questions about us, and so evidently pleased when we used a similar impertinence about them, that we took the opportunity of learning a good deal of their way of life. Mrs. Y. and I were consulting about noticing the bride’s dress, when we found we had put off too long : we were asked how we

liked her dress, and encouraged to handle the silk. So I went on to examine the bundles of false hair that some of them wore ; the pearl bracelets on their tattooed arms, and their jewelled and inlaid pattens.—In answer to our question what they did in the way of occupation, they said “nothing:” but when we inquired whether they never made clothes or sweetmeats, they replied “yes.”—They earnestly wished us to stay always ; and they could not understand why we should not. My case puzzled them particularly. I believe they took me for a servant ; and they certainly pitied me extremely for having to go about without being taken care of. They asked what I did : and Mrs. Y., being anxious to do me all honour, told them I had written many books : but the information was thrown away, because they did not know what a book was. Then we informed them that I lived in a field among mountains, where I had built a house ; and that I had plenty to do ; and we told them in what way : but still they could make nothing of it but that I had brought the stones with my own hands, and built the house myself. There is nothing about which the inmates of harems seem to be so utterly stupid as about women having any thing to do. That time should be valuable to a woman, and that she should have any business on her hands, and any engagements to observe, are things quite beyond their comprehension.

The pattens I have mentioned are worn to keep the feet and flowing dress from the marble pavement, which is often wetted for coolness. I think all the ladies here had bare feet. When they left the raised floor on which they sat, they slipped their feet into their high pattens,

and went stumping about, rather awkwardly. I asked Dr. Thompson, who has admission as a physician into more houses than any other man could familiarly visit, whether he could not introduce skipping-ropes upon these spacious marble floors. I see no other chance of the women being induced to take exercise. They suffer cruelly from indigestion,—gorging themselves with sweet things, smoking intemperately, and passing through life with more than half the brain almost unawakened, and with scarcely any exercise of the limbs. Poor things! our going was a great amusement to them, they said; and they showed this by their intreaties to the last moment that we would not leave them yet, and that we would stay always.—“And these,” as my journal says, “were human beings, such as those of whom Christ made friends!—The chief lady gave me roses as a farewell token.—The Jewish ladies, who took their leave with us, wanted us to visit at another house: but we happily had not time.—I am thankful to have seen a hareem under favourable circumstances; and I earnestly hope I may never see another.”

I kept those roses, however. I shall need no reminding of the most injured human beings I have ever seen,—the most studiously depressed and corrupted women whose condition I have witnessed: but I could not throw away the flowers which so found their way into my hand as to bespeak for the wrongs of the giver the mournful remembrance of my heart.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PRESENT CONDITION OF EGYPT.

I FIND in my journal the following complaint. "One pregnant fact here is that one can get no reliable information from the most reliable men. About matters on which there ought to be no difference of statement, we meet with strange contradictions; such as the rate and amount of tax, &c. In fact, there are no data; and there is little free communication. Even a census does not help. The present census, we are told, will be a total failure—so many will bribe the officials to omit their names, because of the poll-tax." Thus it is that neither I nor any other traveller can give accounts of any value of the actual material condition of the people of Egypt. But we have a substantial piece of knowledge in this very negation of knowledge. We know for certain that a government is bad, and that the people are unprosperous and unhappy in a country where there is a great ostentation of civilisation and improvement, side by side with mystery as to the actual working of social arrangements, and every sort of evasion on the part of the people. We have a substantial piece of knowledge in the fact that men of honour, men of station, men of business, men of courage, who have all the means of information which

the place and time permit, differ in opinion and statement about every matter of importance on which they converse with inquiring strangers. I saw several such men. They were quite willing to tell me what they knew; and they assigned frankly the grounds of their opinions and statements: but what I obtained was merely a mass of contradictions so extraordinary that I cannot venture to give any details: and if I give any general impressions, it can be only under the guard of a declaration that I am sure of nothing, and can offer only what I suppose on the whole to be an indication of the way in which the government of Mohammed Alee works.

Of the Pasha himself I have little or nothing to say. It is a mere impertinence for a passing traveller to estimate the character of the man. That will be a study for the future historian: and it ought to be a wise historian who will hereafter review the life of the man, from its beginning to its close, estimating his temperament, his position, his intercourses and his opportunities, so as to decide on his personal merits,—to judge him as a man. It may be easier to estimate his relation to his people as a matter of fact, apart from the question of his personal value: but I know of no man in the country who is qualified to do this: and of course no stranger who is anxious not to mislead will attempt it.—I never saw the Pasha, except once in his carriage. He was gone up the river, to look about him and depose Selim Pasha, when we returned to Cairo. And if it had not been so, we could merely have seen him by meeting him in the gardens at Shoobra, or in some such transient way as would have

yielded us no real knowledge about him.—Having thus explained how small were our means of information, I will bring together here the few fragments I could collect of knowledge or probability.

One thing is certain : that, in his endeavours to improve the civilisation of his people, Mohammed Alee has omitted the first step, which is essential to all substantial advance. He has given them no security of property or other rights. Moreover, he seems to be unaware that this security is the only ground of improvement. He appears never to have learned that national welfare can arise from no other basis than national industry ; and that there can be no reliable national industry where no man is sure of receiving the rewards of his labour. He appears not to see that public works, of whatever magnitude and utility, are merely monumental as long as the people who are to work at them have to be caught like game, marched to the spot, and kept there by companies of soldiers, and paid at his mere will and pleasure ;—such of them as are not killed off by his mistakes in the provision of food and labour-saving tools. He appears never to have considered that schools, however grand in expence, and in their appearance on paper, will not enlighten the people at large while parents snatch up their children and hide them, on the mere rumour of the approach of his recruiting parties, or maim the young creatures in time to prevent their being chosen for the schools at all. He seems not to see that the love of knowledge cannot grow among the people while he sets his schooling before them as an evil for which he gives in compensation money, maintenance, and the

prospect of a handsome provision in life. He appears not to see that his people cannot become orderly tax-paying subjects while every peasant is liable to ruin whenever his next neighbour fails to pay his dues. The moment the tax-collector is mentioned, the inhabitants of a village will fly to the mountains, and hide there, leaving their crops and goods at the mercy of the government officers: and it does not strike their prince that such a flight is not a step in civilisation. He appears to forget that the people will not become more religious while he possesses himself of the endowments of mosques, promising to keep up their condition, but so neglecting to do so as that all go to decay but those which have strong claims on the piety of the Mohammedans. He does not perceive that lands will not be the better tilled for his seizing on them, while the title deeds are carefully concealed, in hope of a favourable change by and by. He does not see that every man is discouraged from improving his condition while the bad faith of the government, through the corruption of its agents, is a matter of course;—the general rule, to which the fellah and the journeyman find no exceptions. The Pasha may, if he can find the means, cover the land with his public works, his schools, his factories, and his cattle from Dongola; but his people will continue to decline in numbers and resources till he can induce a certain portion of them to endeavour to improve their own condition. Among his many enterprises, this, which should have been the first, appears never to have entered his head. That the population is declining, I have myself no doubt. One official gentleman may point to the plague and

cholera as the causes of a merely temporary depopulation of particular spots, which indicates nothing of the condition of the whole country; and another may reckon up the new canals made in his time: but these considerations are no set off against the evidence there is of decreasing numbers, and of the extent of land perpetually going out of cultivation. It is clear that the truth will not be learned by means of a census, while the agents take bribes to set down a greater or smaller number, or have to make a guess at the population of a village which they find deserted. If the population be decreasing, the fact may be for a while concealed by stout denial: if it be increasing, the fact must soon show itself, to the satisfaction of every body, in a country which certainly once contained above three times the number of the present inhabitants, while exporting food to a wide range of neighbouring states. In a country where there is so much more than room for every body, so much fertility ready to every one's hand, an increase of population must be rapid and evident, under circumstances which admit of it at all: and if, in such a country, there is no evident increase, but a general persuasion of its decline, what can be thought of its ruler's boast of advancing civilisation!—There was a time when the Nile Valley was regularly inhabited by a population of 8,000,000. The number of settled inhabitants is believed to be now not more than 2,500,000; and it is, to all appearance, still declining, as it has been from the beginning of the century.

I cannot say that I saw much during my voyage which could serve as material for an opinion on this

subject : but I saw something. I saw one new canal in Upper Egypt ; and, to set against this, I saw many and large tracts of land let out of cultivation, showing evident signs of former irrigation and drainage, and sprinkled over, or bordered by ruined cottages or villages. I saw a few factories struggling for existence, while it was evident to English eyes that the only security for their permanency was in the improvement of agriculture ;—the natural occupation of the Egyptians, and that to which Nature perpetually invites them, and for which she would reward them, if the tyranny and bad faith of Man did not interfere. But how is agriculture to improve under such arrangements as the following ?—The cultivator undertakes to till a certain quantity of land,—all the land, it is understood, being the Pasha's property, except such as he pensions or gratifies certain parties with. Some, I am aware, declare that private property in land, of a much older date than the Pasha's life, does exist to a great extent. Others, whom I think higher authority, say there is little or none, though the title deeds of a large quantity are hidden away, in hope of better times.—And, by the way, what a telling fact it is that there should be any doubt about such a point as this among well-informed men on the spot !—At all events, whether the land is the Pasha's or another's, the cultivator engages, in return for being furnished with all that is needful for its cultivation, to hand over a stipulated amount (not proportion) of the produce, after harvest. He receives, among other requisites, an order for a good and sufficient quantity of seed-corn from the government granary. — When he presents the order, the great

official gentleman at the granary directs a subordinate officer to supply the applicant with three-quarters of the specified quantity, he retaining the other quarter for his own fee. The second officer subtracts a second quarter; and the cultivator sows his land with half the proper seed. Of course, when it comes up thin, he considers what he shall do. The probability is that at harvest time, he will go out in the night, and filch from his neighbours' fields, while those neighbours may be in his fields, doing the like. When the day of reckoning comes, one or more of the neighbours (it may be remembered that some of my party saw eight) may be chained and led off to be bastinadoed for nonpayment of dues. Or, as some other friends of mine saw, the Pasha may send a force to seize the land of a whole district, because some of the cultivators may be unable, or be supposed to be unable, to pay their rent.—While such is the state of things, and in the absence of any promise of improvement, the stranger does not see how manufactures should grow out of the agriculture of Egypt, or an increasing population out of either. Nor is it easy to suppose that any circumstances which may lie out of the stranger's sight can neutralise such facts as these.

The state of affairs does not seem to be mended by the Pasha's practice of giving away his villages,—which is the same thing as giving away the people who inhabit them. When, for instance, it is inconvenient to pay to any claimant or favourite five hundred purses a year, the Pasha will give half the money and five or six villages. Then, of course, the uncertainty of the peasants' lot at best is aggravated by new liabilities :

he depends on the temper, fortunes, and business habits of his new proprietor, while he is not relieved from the corruption of the agents with whom he has to deal. The mischief of the Middleman system exists everywhere, whoever be the proprietor; and while the proprietor may make matters worse than the average, he can hardly lighten the evils of such a system, in any one village.—As might be expected, no such spectacle is ever seen as a native bettering his condition, or attempting to do so. A foreigner, whether he be a slave from Circassia, or a man of science from France, Italy or England, may rise to high honours and great wealth; but if any native born Egyptian can improve his rank and fortunes, I never heard of such; and it is certain that the people generally have no other view, no further hope, than obtaining bare necessities from season to season; and I might say, in regard to too many, from day to day.

And now, what are we to think of the boasted public works of Egypt? By all means let them proceed, if they aid production and transit. For as much as they are a good in themselves, let them proceed. But let it be remembered that public works in Egypt do not arise from a firm foundation of national industry, and that the people who work at them are virtually slaves. The case is just the reverse of that of the public works of Ancient Egypt. The old Pharaohs, natives of the Nile Valley, raised their mighty palaces and temples by the hands of the captives they brought into slavery from foreign lands. Now we see the opposite case of a Greek ruler, his throne surrounded by foreigners, raising the monuments of his reign by the hands of the

enslaved nation whom he calls his subjects. Those who can may choose between the two cases for preference. In each case, there is much vain-glory in the enterprise, and much barbarism in the way of carrying it out. The old Pharaoh thought to honour his gods, according to the morality of his time, and made no pretence of benefiting his slave-labourers. The modern Pasha does homage to the morality of *his* time by professing to aim at the good of his people; but he outrages every right and every interest of the many thousands who are driven to work at his patriotic enterprises. As we have seen, nearly a hundredth part of the whole present population of the country (23,000 out of 2,500,000) were killed off in six months, in the making of the Mahmoudieh canal. After such an experiment as this, the prosecution of other public works, by labourers no better fitted and prepared to achieve and desire them, appears to those on the spot a barbarism equal to any that can be charged upon any heathen temple-builder of them all.

As for other labouring classes than the cultivators,—the boatmen are, I am told, the most fortunate, and therefore the most intelligent and prudent. They are sure of the money they earn, and are exempt from the extortion which ruins the fortunes, and breaks the spirit of other classes of labourers. As for the insecurity and extortion, almost all the working classes seem as badly off as the cultivator. Everybody has heard of Ibraheem Pasha's fine garden at Roda. The labourers in that garden are paid nominally a piastre and a quarter per day. Out of this, they have to feed themselves. This they might possibly do, if they really

received the money : but they are paid in corn, or some other produce which it is convenient so to dispose of ; and this produce is reckoned at a price higher than they can obtain for it.

At the Sugar-refinery, near this garden of Ibraheem Pasha's, the people are paid with molasses, in a similar manner ; and, in addition, they have to bribe the measurer of the molasses to give them due measure,—it being an understood thing that he will help himself out of either their purses or their molasses.

While on the subject of the Pasha's public works, it should be remembered, in justice to him, that he is under strong stimulus to prosecute them. I am not, as I said before, attempting to estimate the character of the Pasha, but only to tell the very little I could learn of the condition of his people : but while his public works, with all their ostentation, stand in such mournful contrast with the misery of his people, it would be unjust to him not to mention that he has about him men of various European nations, who endeavour to serve both their national and individual interests by stimulating him to enterprises in which they may be wanted, or their country may be served. However shrewd the old man may be on the whole, however he may amuse himself by receiving flatteries and holding out hopes, and hanging out caprices, he cannot, in his state of crude civilisation, be always clear-sighted and prudent. He may be easily dazzled by the glory proposed to him of doing something which shall make France and England wonder ; something which shall make the whole world think him the most patriotic ruler in it.

At the same time, we see how cautious he can be about matters which he really understands. Some people on the spot, as well as many at a distance, wonder that a man who acted so wisely and well as the Pasha did about our communication with India, when nothing better could have been hoped from him than that he would have closed the passage through Egypt, should not yet have made a canal or railway to the Red Sea, as he is incessantly urged to do. Those who so wonder may be assured that there is more in the matter than has been presented to them. It is a case which the Pasha happens to understand, and about which he chooses to take his time, and to judge for himself. He knows all about the shallows at both ends of the proposed ship canal, and he knows also the precise depth of the interests engaged in the railway scheme. He has amused himself by seeing locomotives run on a little railway before his palace: he looked, and laughed, and stroked his beard, and talked of the devil being in it; and he has some reason to think that the devil would be in it indeed if he should be in a hurry to lay down the rails which as he knows, lie at hand, wanting to be used. He knows what a devil he would raise among the Bedouens if he rashly took from them the carriage of persons and goods through the Desert. What could he do with these wild tribes, if he deprived them of their only profitable employment? And how could he compensate them for the loss of the Desert transport by which they now live? If the railway did not interfere with the Bedouens, being used only for India passengers and their luggage and the mails, it may be asked whether it would answer to the Pasha to

make a railroad for this purpose merely, and to receive the proceeds only twice a month. He may think that an inland canal, from the Nile to Suez, would answer better, as it would be in use every day for the transport of corn and other produce. He may think that the whole matter, however important to England, may be so dubious in regard to Egypt as not to be hastily proceeded in at the risk of rousing the Bedouens to harass the country. If he appears to people in London and Paris as dilatory and uncertain about undertaking either of these works as he has been rash and positive about others, it is clear that there must be a reason for his new slowness and uncertainty: and that reason may be other than one of foreign policy. When I hear that either canal or railroad is certainly begun in earnest, and not merely surveyed for, I shall believe that it may be at work in time. Till then, I am not disposed to think we shall have either during the old man's life. If he goes seriously into the undertaking at all, I think he will make a canal. If he makes a canal, I think it will be an inland one,—from the Nile to Suez. And if he makes a railroad, I think it will not be the English one which has been so earnestly pressed on his attention, both from England and on the spot. The only thing I am sure of, however, is that people at home had better not decide what the Pasha ought to do, and represent the matter as a very plain and simple one. For my own part,—while seeing as distinctly as any one the advantage to my own country of an improved passage across the isthmus of Suez, and after having learned on the spot all that I could on every side, I see that it is a

matter so complicated at present with difficulties of many kinds, that I am glad not to be obliged to form an opinion on what ought to be done.

I really feel very doubtful about sending this chapter through the press,—so meagre as it is, and yet so vague. I could have made it much fuller, and far more interesting and distinct, if I had written down what I was told, —or either side of what I was told. But, as I said before, I could not rely on the information, while entirely relying on the honour of those who kindly gave it. I have thought it best to offer only the little that I believe to be true. Of this little I cannot say how much might be modified by facts which may lie behind ; and I feel that I know scarcely any thing of the modern Egyptian polity but the significant fact that nothing can be certainly known.

•

CHAPTER XXIV.

GARDENS OF RODA AND SHOOBRA.—HELIOPOLIS.—
 PETRIFIED FOREST.—TOMBS OF THE MEMLOOK
 KINGS.—THE NILOMETER.—LEAVING CAIRO.

THE roses which hang over the wall of the garden in the island of Roda are a pleasant sight to the traveller returning from the south. As some of our party had letters to the gentleman who is in charge of the place, we went to see it. The fame of this garden proves how difficult it must be to have a good garden at Cairo. Besides the roses (which were not abundant) we saw a few anemones and violets; and that was nearly all. The fruits are oranges, dates and bananas, excellent; grapes, pretty good; peaches and nectarines not good; melons bad. Neither fruits nor flowers can satisfy one who knows what gardening is in Europe. Sometimes, there is drought; and then again, the river comes up occasionally to destroy every thing,—to drown the garden. There is to be a steam-engine to water the place with; and thus the drought will be kept off.—I believe it is the fashion to admire this garden, and to imagine it peopled by the Houris of Ibraheem Pasha's hareem. We were told by the gardener that the ladies had been twice; but that their going was an exceptional event. This gentleman can hardly wish it otherwise if, as I

believe is true, these wives of a grey-bearded man behave like disorderly children, doing mischief to the flower-beds in their senseless play.—The only thing that struck me as at all beautiful in any part of the garden was an elegant bamboo, which was a treat to the eye. Everywhere else it was painful to see the attempt at making an English garden of an arid plot, where it seemed as if all the plants had quarrelled, and were trying how far apart they could keep.

We were delighted, after this, with the Pasha's garden at Shoobra. It has a character appropriate to the country. It is formal, but exceedingly pretty; studded thick with parterres of roses, geraniums and stocks; and thick set as possible with orange and lemon trees. The Djebel is charming;—the hill ascended by a succession of terraces connected by a trelliced ascent, which conducts to a fine point of view. Such a formal and blossomy garden is in strong contrast with scenery round; and the true charm of a garden is there accordingly. We thought it the only place worthy of the name that we had seen in Egypt.—The kiosks round the central fountain are beautiful; and one of them is a truly splendid apartment. If the ordinary gas-lamps were absent, and better glass present in the windows, and more flowers about the fountain, this spot would nearly fulfil our ideas of garden luxury in the East.—I cannot imagine why the Pasha's windows are so badly glazed. In these days of universal plate glass, it is strange to look round the apartments of his palaces, and see his brilliant furniture, and gorgeous bijoux from Paris contrasting with the coarse, greenish, seamed window panes. I would advise the European

power which is most anxious to propitiate Mohammed Alee to send him out a freight of plate glass windows. I can assure such European power that a vast commotion of envy and jealousy will be excited in those circles where every present made to the Pasha is regarded as an event in the politics of the world. Come now ! which of the politicians of the world will be quickest to glaze the Pasha's windows ?

The ride from Cairo to Shoobra is the pleasantest we found in the neighbourhood ; I might almost call it the only one. It is under an avenue of picturesque spreading trees, chiefly acacias, through which the tilled lands on either hand show themselves, refreshing the eyes. The Nile, spreading abroad in reaches, or flowing between shoals, is visible also ; to-day in a state of singular commotion, from the strength of the wind. The dust flew in clouds, and the river broke in waves over the shoals.

It was just such weather the day (February 19th) we went to that mournful place,—old Heliopolis. We were to have made our first trial of camel-riding that day ; but the wind was too high, though it might permit us to ride lowly, on our asses, through the fenced and cultivated country which lies between Cairo and the solitary obelisk. Our ride was pleasant enough while it was among fields, and under the shelter of hedges and avenues of acacia. On our return by a different route, we were almost strangled with wind and sand.

The obelisk looks well from a distance, springing from among trees : but as the sole relic of the once brilliant little city, the University of old Egyptian learning, it is a mournful object enough. When one

comes near, one finds its very hieroglyphics filled up and plastered over by the wild bees. Round its base there is a hollow, fruitlessly dug to ascertain how deep its platform lies. The surface of the land must have risen very much. Yet the circuit of mounds indicates where the remains of the city lie. This circuit of mounds is what one should come to Heliopolis to see. It is a moment not to be forgotten when one stands at the foot of the obelisk, and looks round through trees and over-stretches of sand at these mounds, and thinks of Joseph coming here to fetch his wife, and celebrating the marriage with all the courtly and priestly pomp of the time:—and of Moses, sitting here at the feet of the priests, nurtured with such care and wisdom as would be given to the education of the son of Pharaoh's daughter:—and of Plato, dwelling within this circuit for thirteen years, as it is said, and almost daily perhaps, in all that time, passing the spot where we are standing now, and looking up at the tapering lines of sculptures, as we are now looking up at the bee-cells with which those sculptures are filled up. This was one glimpse more into the old world of Egypt, after the cloud curtain had seemed to cover all. After yielding this brief glimpse, it closed again, to open no more.

On our return, we were taken to see, in a sort of garden, the tree of Joseph and Mary; a very old sycamore, under which, as Jews and Mohammedans alike believe, the Holy Family reposed when they fled into Egypt,—by this honour rendering the tree immortal,—as one would think it must be, if this be really it.

In this direction lies the (so-called) Petrified Forest; an absurd name, meant probably to convey the fact

that the quantity of petrified wood is surprisingly large. The ride to this spot is so interesting that it matters little what lies at the end of it. After threading the narrow ways of the city, we emerged by the fine "gate of Victory,"—the Bab e' Nusr,—into the eastern Desert, in view of the Tombs of the Memlook Kings, past whose courts and domes and minarets we rode in among the sandhills. We had a fine view of the road to Suez, which wound away to our left; and then we entered the region of rock and sand, of heat and drought, where, in a few days, we were to make our home for many weeks. In about an hour, we began to note some odd-looking stones lying about in the sand, and among ordinary looking pebbles. These were pieces of petrified wood. As we advanced, they lay thicker; and before we returned, we had certainly seen an astonishing quantity. Fragments of palm trunks, approaching to the size of logs, were perhaps the commonest kind: but there were several kinds of wood; even the bamboo was there, with its joints distinctly visible.

Of course, we visited the Tombs of the Memlook Kings,—commonly but erroneously called the Tombs of the Caliphs. What a descent from the Tombs of the Kings that we had seen up the river! Yet these well repay a visit; and it may be worth while to describe one of them, very briefly. These tombs look almost as well when one rides among them as from the terrace of the citadel, where one is so struck with the pale yellow domes and minarets, rising against their ground of darker sand. Now those domes and spires stood up bright and sharp against the cloudless sky. Round

the base of the dome of some are inscriptions in coloured tiles,—white letters on a dark blue or other ground. Some of the walls outside are in courses of yellowish white and red, alternately; the white being the limestone of the neighbouring hills, and the red a mere daub of paint upon the stone. These tombs are going to decay so fast, that the next generation of travellers will see but little of them. Some of the walls are slanting to their fall: others show gaping rents; and many stones are carried away by the builders of some new edifice.

The threshold across which we stepped into the enclosure of one of these tombs was of grey granite, split down the very middle of an antique sculptured figure, whose cartouche remained entire. Thus do men go on making for themselves inviolable tombs by violating those of their predecessors! This fractured sculpture was laid down for a door-step over which the kingly pride of this Memlook sultaun might pass to its last repose: and now men cross this threshold, to carry away the stones of the newer edifice,—but not to serve for another royal tomb.

Within the court, we found a dry and meagre bit of garden, and a well covered with a shattered wooden dome. Along two sides of the court were dwellings; those of one side ruined; those of the other inhabited by tenants who have them free. There is no competition for these almshouses; for the people are becoming fewer in the land, and there is plenty of houseroom. Apartments as good as these, and more convenient for situation, may be had in Cairo for next to nothing; and there is therefore no eagerness to live rent free in

this place.—On a third side is a wall, with a beautiful minaret at one corner. This minaret is fast going to ruin: but one of the gentlemen made his way to its upper gallery, whence he obtained a fine view,—even to the second station on the Suez road.—On the fourth side of the court is the Mosque, with the tomb of the sultaun at one end, and that of his harem at the other,—each under a dome. The loftiness of this range was very striking: and indeed I never was in any mosque where I did not wonder afresh at the height of the dome, and the magnificence of the spring of the pillars. The handsome stairs and pulpit of the mosque, and its rich covered and inlaid screens are rotting away. The sordid decay was a desolate spectacle.

From hence we went to see a Coptic church,—which we found altogether disgusting, from its profane altar-piece to the swarms of fleas which inhabit its matting. There was a handsome carved screen; but nothing else that we could bear to look at. The pictures of saints were most audacious; and as for the altar-piece,—any Mohammedan who ever saw its central figure would be quite justified in classing these Christians with low idolators. It may be well to look into these places, to learn to be just towards the originals of other corrupted faiths, whose symbols may no more represent their primitive ideas than these Coptic pictures represent Christianity.

On Saturday the 20th, the weather was suitable for our first attempt at camel-riding; and we went to the Nilometer. We had committed the ordering of the apparatus to those whose business it was, and who

were supposed to understand the matter: and they had prepared for Mrs. Y. and me wooden boxes or chairs, instead of saddles. In these we set out from the Hotel d'Orient. The swaying motion, and the being carried as dead weight, were excessively disagreeable, and especially to one so fond of riding as I am. Being carried on a camel is too little like riding at best: but while one is on a saddle, and holds a rein, one may amuse one's-self with the semblance: but the being carried in a chair permits no such relief. Moreover, it is impossible so to fasten on the chair as that it shall never slip in the least on one side; and the leaning sensation is intolerable. It seemed very doubtful to me how long I could support this method of travelling; and I wondered what was to be done if my companion and I should have to protest against it in the middle of the Desert. Happily we were seen by Linant Bey, whom we met at dinner afterwards, at the Consul General's. He has travelled over more miles of desert than almost any civilised man, and knows all about it: and he told us at once that we must leave our chairs behind, and adopt such a method of cushioning our saddles as he would instruct us in. Before dinner was over, he was sent for, to follow the Pasha up the river immediately; but his instructions set us on our camels to the best advantage. I often afterwards rejoiced that he had chanced to see us that day.

We met in this ride two or three sons of Ibraheem Pasha's,—gentlemanly and lively-looking boys.—We crossed by a ferry boat to the island of Roda, to see the Nilometer, which I was surprised to find a very

pretty place ;—a damp, dim chamber, tufted with water weeds ;—steep stairs down into it ; and a green pool and mud at the bottom :—in the centre, a graduated pillar :—in the four sides of the chamber, four pointed arches,—one filled in with an elegant grating :—round the cornice, and over the arches, Cufic inscriptions ; and in two of the niches, within the arches, similar inscriptions. The crypt-like aspect of the chamber, with its aquatic adornments of weeds and mosses,—so perfectly in accordance with its purpose,—was charming—the charm being aided perhaps by a sense of the unique character of the place. I need not say that we did not see the base of the graduated pillar. We are told that it is never seen,—even when the Nile is at the lowest,—the yearly nominal cleaning out leaving yet a considerable deposit of mud. We were glad to have seen the Nilometer ; and this was our last sight-seeing at Cairo,—unless it was the Ezbekeeyeh, the next day.

The great square of the Ezbekeeyeh is always gay on Sundays, when the Franks walk there after church, and the Mohammedans sit smoking in groups to watch them. Some of the returned pilgrims further enlivened it this day. There were a few tents, and some conjurers ; and pilgrims walking with a flag and singing : and then they formed into a circle, and one man chaunted prayers. The eastern and western groups,—the turbans and burnouses here, and the French bonnets and mantles there,—all among the dark acacias, or crossing the gleams of bright sunshine, make a strange picture, not to be likened to anything I saw afterwards.

Monday, the 22d, was our packing day. I was to

carry nothing that would not travel in saddle-bags: so I took care that my saddle-bags should be very large. Having stuffed them with necessaries,—not forgetting plenty of paper and ink,—I put away all finery and delicate articles of dress or use, in trunks which were to meet us at Alexandria, three months afterwards. What kind of appearance I was to make at Jerusalem and Damascus, it was useless to consider now. Saddle-bags will not carry bonnets, caps and dresses which will not bear crushing; and all such were therefore left behind.—The hems of our gowns told rather a sad tale of the state of the floors in our hotel. We could only hope that the Desert would prove a cleaner floor. We had done our best by remonstrance here; but the answer to our petition to have our rooms cleaned was decisive:—it would be useless to clean our rooms, as they would be dirty again to-morrow! We had not our remedy in our own hands, as Swift had with his man Ralph; so we were obliged to be patient.

Remembering the scarcity of water which we were about to encounter for some weeks, I washed and dried this day the few things which remained over from the hands of the washerman. The occasion was more strange than the employment; and strangely I felt it. Here we were going to spend weeks in the newest scene and way of life the world could offer us. We were going into the dreariest wastes of the globe, with no means of existence but those which we carried with us. We were going to spend weeks among rocks and sands, wild Arabs, glaring suns, scorching winds, and a poor sprinkling of brackish pools. How should we like it? How should I, for one, bear it? How could I

tell beforehand? I had had some experience, in former years, of the hardships of travel in rude countries: but I had never tried anything like this.—More strange still was the thought of what we were going to see. Strange above all, perhaps, was the composure with which I let all the imagery of this extraordinary prospect pass before me. I could not detect in myself any alarm, any surprise, any kind of excitement: and I have little doubt of the same calmness being in the mind of every one of the large company who were this day preparing to set forth through the Desert.

And now,—as to where we were going. Before we left England, Mr. Y. had asked me what I thought of our going to Petra. I laughed, not at all supposing that he could be in earnest about English travellers,—and especially women,—going to Petra. In my youth I had read all the books of Arabian travel that I could get hold of; and I was aware of the extreme difficulty and danger of passing through Idumæa in those times, and up to the present day: I never gave a serious thought to the suggestion of going to Petra; nor did I suppose that any one else did.

Till within a few days of our departure, our plan had been, as a matter of course, to go by El Arish to Hebron and Jerusalem: and again, Mr. Y. had asked me how I should like to go to Petra, if we found we could get there from Hebron; and again I had laughed, not supposing him in earnest.—But a more distinct vision arose when many friends, residents of Cairo and passing travellers,—I think I may say all our friends,—advised and urged our going to Mount Sinai. This I did most heartily desire; and certainly not the less

when it appeared that a large party of travellers, including English, Scotch and Irish, were in hope,—a doubtful and vague hope, but still a hope,—of penetrating to Petra, on their way from Sinai to Jerusalem. If they could do it, so might we. But still, my thoughts barely glanced towards it; and when I was told the good news that we were going to Mount Sinai, I felt this quite enough, and did not yet look further.

The large party I have mentioned,—a company of as kind hearts as one can find in a chance wandering over the world,—wished us to join them. We held off from the junction, feeling that the fatigues of desert travelling would be quite enough for some of us, without any addition from the presence of numbers. As for me, I am a particularly unsociable member of a travelling party; as I suppose every deaf person must be who wishes to profit by the journey. It is impossible for a deaf person to listen from the ridge of a camel, and note the objects of travel at the same time. So my way must be to ride in silence during the travelling hours; and we did not expect to have strength left for any evening sociability. We therefore engaged our own sheikh and escort, and twenty camels, wished our friendly compatriots a good journey, and resolved to go by ourselves.

We were to set out on Tuesday morning, February 23rd. On the Monday we bade farewell to our Cairo friends; and Stanley Poole and his brother accompanied me to the terrace of the citadel, for one more enjoyment of that glorious view.—That evening, the mail from England arrived. In the morning, we

waited for letters ; and Mr. E's. share detained us till after an early dinner.

For some days our preparations had been very visible in the court-yard and environs of our hotel. Mr. Y's. large tent, which was to house Mrs. Y. and me, had been stoutly lined for warmth at night. Our sheikh, Bishara, with his bright and genial face, had basked there in the sun every day, and given his advice on our affairs ; and our camels had been brought to the spot. All this morning, the cross-grained brutes had been growling and groaning in the yard ; and when their loads were put on, their vicious lamentations were horrible to hear.—Before two, p. m., we were mounted ; and we paced forth in procession through the streets of Cairo. The sheikh wore under his blue burnoose, a brilliant dress of green satinet, striped with red and gold colour. The gentlemen were dressed half and half, Eastern and European. Alec and the cook were smoking after the toils of the morning :—my camel-driver kissed my camel repeatedly, and allured the creature to stoop and offer its huge lips to the salute.

From my high seat, I saw more of the deep, dim, wide interiors of the Cairo dwellings, and of the people at their trades, than I ever did before. This last view of the streets was the best : but there was something mournful in passing for the last time those picturesque alleys, and imposing mosques, and busy bazaars, and the captivating groups of oriental figures of which the eye never tires.—We passed out near the citadel, traversed the bazaar or market which was formed outside the gates, and entered upon the sand of the Desert.

I now thought camel-riding as easy as sleeping on a feather bed. I found afterwards how little first impressions are worth in such a case: but in this unexpected ease, and in the beauty about me, and the prospect of the journey before me, I was very happy, when lo! at about two miles from the city, there were the green and blue and white tents of the British travellers!—I supposed that they had been delayed, and that we should pass them: but no!—our camels were made to lie down, and we were made to dismount, on reaching the camp. This was Bissateen: and the escort never will go further than Bissateen the first day, that there may be an opportunity of supplying any needful article that may have been forgotten.—Here we were, after all, in junction with the British travellers;—a junction much approved by the escort, as conducing to the safety of all parties. We separated no more till we left Jerusalem, nearly two months afterwards.

We strolled about in the sunset light, bidding many a farewell to Cairo, which stood out clear and bright in the evening glow,—its citadel predominant. The green levels between us and the Nile looked flatter in surface and more vivid in colour than ever. Over westward were the Pyramids, glorious against the orange sky; and near us the palm grove belonging to Bissateen, and the wells where the women came with their water-pots and cords. Close at hand was our camp, with the Arabs in groups round the fires, and camels lying about as if they wanted to be sketched. We were not sorry now to have stopped for the night within sight of Cairo and the Pyramids.

As I consider this day the last of our Egyptian life,

I shall here close my first Part. It is true, we did not pass the Egyptian frontier for some days ; but our life in the Desert was so Arabian in its character and interests as to belong to the Arabian section of this book.

Here, then, we take leave of Egypt,—to me by far the most interesting portion of our travels. I believe that some others did not find it so in the experience of their journey ; and I hope my readers may not in the retrospect. And yet I should like them to feel with me in regard to the surpassing interest of Egypt, even at the cost of their relishing the latter half of my book less than the first.

PART II.

SINAI AND ITS FAITH.

“If I have beheld the Sun in his splendour,
Or the Moon advancing in brightness,
And my heart have been secretly enticed,
And my mouth have kissed my hand,—
This also were a crime to be punished by the judge;
For I should have denied the God who is above.”

Job, XXXI. 26-28.

“Celsus seemeth here to me to do just as if a man travelling into Egypt, where the wise men of the Egyptians, according to their country-learning, philosophise much about those things that are accounted by them divine, whilst the idiots, in the meantime, hearing only certain fables which they know not the meaning of, are very much pleased therewith: Celsus, I say, doth as if such a sojourner in Egypt, who had conversed only with those idiots, and not been at all instructed by any of the priests in their arcane and recondite mysteries, should boast that he knew all that belonged to the Egyptian theology.—What we have now affirmed concerning the difference between the wise men and the idiots amongst the Egyptians, the same may be said also of the Persians, amongst whom the religious rites are performed rationally by those that are ingenious, whilst the superficial vulgar look no further in the observation of them than the external symbol or ceremony.”—*Origen against Celsus.*

“And he who had believed (Moses) said, ‘O my people, follow me: I will direct you into the right way. . . . O my people, how is it that I invite you unto salvation, and ye invite me unto the fire? Ye invite me to deny God, and to associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge; but I invite you unto the Mighty, the Very Forgiving.’”—*Kurán, ch. XL.*

SINAI AND ITS FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

MOSES BEFORE THE EXODUS.—ROUTE TO THE RED SEA. —CAMEL-RIDING.

IN travelling from the Nile to Mount Sinai, the chief interest is in following the track of the Israelites; and the person one thinks most of is Moses.

IN the island of Roda we had seen the spot where, according to tradition, his bulrush cradle was found. At Memphis, we had been in the place of his abode; and at Heliopolis, in that of his education. According to a Mohammedan tradition, he was a learned priest of Heliopolis. Whether this is probable or not, he was certainly of the priestly caste, being adopted as a son of the royal house. At all events, the early part of his life, up to mature manhood, was passed in ease and in the leisure of learned pursuits, in the neighbourhood with which we were now familiar, and whose natural features were deeply impressed upon our minds by our grateful and admiring interest in his history. Its natural features (from which it is impossible now to exclude the Pyramids) were, however, all we had. Every change that Time and Man could effect has been

wrought; and we felt everywhere that only by its natural features could Moses himself now recognise the region where his mind was born and reared. The cities he knew are gone, and others have arisen on other sites. Of the race he knew, not a living man remains, and another has come into its place.

But we were going now into the region where his purposes were born, reared and accomplished. We were to see objects which he saw, and as he saw them;—the scene unchanged, and the people the same, (one may say) whom he met;—the same races, living in the same manner, and presenting the same aspect. For some weeks to come, we might look about us with his eyes, and become able, day by day, to enter more into his mind.

He had three times crossed the Sinai peninsula on which we were about to enter: three times, in very different states of mind. The first time, he was unhappy,—his heart heavy with the sense of the degradation of his Hebrew brethren, and his fortunes scattered to the winds by the act of sympathy with his race,—his slaughter of one of their task-masters,—which had come to the knowledge of Pharaoh. Away he went, across the peninsula, and to the opposite coast of the Eastern arm of the Red Sea, taking up his rest with the Midianites, who appear to have been more civilised than most of the tribes inhabiting the desert. It is supposed that they were engaged in commerce,—their position being favourable to it. Josephus says that the men were not shepherds, but left the care of their flocks to women.—The sheikh (or priest, for the word signifies both) whose daughter

Moses married, gave him the charge of his flocks, it appears.—In the solitudes to which he now retired with his family, shifting his tent from valley to valley, according to the needs of his flock, and sitting down beside the secluded springs among the rocky mountains, his mind wrought vigorously among the materials stored up by his careful education. There is no place like the Desert for fruitful meditation. There, among the immutable forms of nature, lives the Past, for those who know how to look for it. It will not rise to view among the changing scenes of social life, nor speak where the voices of men are heard. But in the austere silence of the Desert it presses its tale upon the tranquillised soul, and will, to one who knows, as Moses did then, and Mohammed after him, how to invoke, prophesy of the Future ;—of its unborn child which is to redeem the human race from its sins and its burden of woes. Here, as Moses sat under the shrubby palm in its moist nook, or lay under the shadow of the rock, did the past come, at the call of his instructed memory, and tell him how these mighty Egyptians had been slaves as his Hebrew brethren now were, and how they had cast off the yoke of their bondage, and risen into a powerful nationality by driving out the foe who had oppressed them for a thousand years, and by restoring to their honours the Supreme and his attributes through whose aid they believed all great deeds to be achieved: and here, to his clear understanding, did the future promise the redemption of his race, and disclose the means by which it should be wrought. Here he learned to see,—not at once as in vision, but in the dawning of many days, and from the suggestions of many thoughtful years,—

how the redemption of the Hebrew race should be effected, how far the precedents of former times should be followed, and where they should be departed from ; —what there was new and peculiar in the circumstances of his people, and how these circumstances should be dealt with. He saw that the Hebrews could not rise in revolt against their oppressors, as the Egyptians had done against their Shepherd conquerors ; for the Hebrews had not the rights of native possession ; and they were so debased by their servitude as to be incapable of warfare. He saw that they must be first removed from the influences which had made them what they were, and then elevated into a capability for independent social life.

He saw that they must be first removed, and then educated, before they could be established. In following out this course of speculation, he was led to perceive a mighty truth which appears to have been known to no man before him ;—a truth so holy and so vast that even yet mankind seem scarcely able fully to apprehend it ; —the truth that all Ideas are the common heritage of all men, and that none are too precious to be communicated to every human mind. It was his clear apprehension of this truth, and his intrepidity in bringing it into practice which made Moses the greatest of men, and the eternal benefactor of the world. He was before skilled in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians :” it was this which raised him above the collective wisdom of all their long line of priests, and made him worth more to the human race than all the sages together who have been born of it. His knowledge, even of spiritual things, vast as it was, was limited by the boundaries of

his time; but this one clear spiritual perception of human rights made him a benefactor for all time.—He did not rise to a higher view of God than his being a national god, and the greatest of gods: he regarded Jehovah as the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not as the god of the Egyptians and mankind at large: but, limited as was his view of God, his recognition of the spiritual rights of Man was the fullest and noblest that has ever been obtained, or can, perhaps, ever be obtained. Warned by what he had seen in Egypt, his purpose was to admit to the divine knowledge which he held every individual of the people he belonged to. By his position in the priestly class in Egypt and his learning, he knew how the priests of Memphis and Heliopolis believed in One Supreme deity,—“the Unutterable,” of whom they uttered not a word to any beyond their own class; and he had seen how they presented to the people for worship merely the deified attributes of their god, and consecrated objects whose sanctity they knew to be merely derived: and in the degradation of the popular mind he witnessed the effects of this mistaken and presumptuous reservation. As the images crossed him in his solitude of the religious feasts of the Egyptians, the gross brute worship into which they had sunk, and the foul superstitions in which they grovelled, he conceived the brave purpose,—the boldest enterprise, I believe, on record,—of admitting every one of Jehovah’s people to the fullest possible knowledge of him, and to direct allegiance to him. Holding himself the knowledge of the Supreme Jehovah, he aspired, on behalf of his people, that they should have no other gods before Him. In

Egypt, he had seen the only theory of government of which perhaps he had conceived,—that of a theocracy, —corrupted in its workings by such a concealment of the Providential ruler as caused the people to rest their homage and obedience on the vicegerent, and become wholly insensible to that divine origin of their moral and material government which was acknowledged by the priests. The class who monopolised wisdom and knowledge recognised in the priestly brother whom they made king the favoured son and chosen agent of a divine ruler; but the people regarded their king as the ultimate ruling power. The bold purpose of Moses was to remove the medium, and to bring his brethren face to face with Jehovah as people and King.

When these purposes had grown out of his aspirations, the details of the enterprise grew from perception into purpose too. The Hebrews could never become enlightened amidst the darkness of popular life in Egypt. There could not be spiritual light in their houses, while “darkness that might be felt” brooded all about them. They could never be purified while the corruptions of idolatry swarmed within their dwellings, and among their dress and food,—coming up from the river, and down upon them in the very air. They could never be elevated in views and character while subject to contempt as “an unclean people” (as Manetho calls them) and to the wrongs of slavery.—They must be removed.

They must be removed:—but how and whither? They were cowardly, selfish, incapable of concert and of fidelity to a leader’s purpose,—as the bulk of a body of slaves must ever be. Rising in revolt was out of the

question. A stealthy flight was equally impossible. They must come out in a body, and openly, and under the sanction of the government. And the superstition,—and yet more, the fears, of the governing power must be wrought upon, till the sanction was given.

But then, where were they to go? The countries from which their fathers had come were occupied by people as warlike as the Egyptians, and as superstitious. The sunken Hebrews could neither possess themselves of these countries, nor be safer from idolatry than in Egypt. They must be led into some empty place where, without disturbance, they might learn to live. They must be led into the Desert. No one knew better than Moses at this time, the privileges of life in the Desert. He had witnessed the hardihood, the self-denial, the trusting poverty, the generous hospitality, and the comparatively pure piety of the Arab tribes who lived in tents in Nature's ascetic retreats. These were the very qualities the Hebrews needed, and could never attain elsewhere. It was not civilisation and its lessons that they needed. Civilisation and slavery were indissolubly connected in their ideas. Discipline was what they needed; and not that discipline from the hand of man which must include more or less of slavery; but the discipline of Nature, whose service is perfect freedom. Here, while relaxing from the excessive toil which had broken them down, they were in no danger from indulgence. Here, while learning endurance, it would not be at the cost of that exasperation of feelings which had hitherto embittered their hardships. They would learn that submission to Nature which is as great

a virtue as submission to Man is a vice. Here, among the free winds, and bold suns, and broad shadows, with liberty to rove, and exemption from the very presence of Man, they might become braced in soul, free in mind, and disciplined in body, till they should become fit for an ulterior destination.—No doubt, Moses reverted with reverence to that prominent subject of Hebrew pride,—the greatness of his forefathers; and his hope for his brethren took the form of raising them into a state worthy of their origin. He thought of their father Abraham, pious, powerful, and rich in the wealth of the Desert: and he looked forward to the time when these sunken children of Abraham might so awe the whole region as to sit down where they pleased beside the springs, and rove among the boundless wastes, and pitch their tents anywhere under the starry sky, and then worship Jehovah before the door. As dwellers in tents had their great forefathers been strong and faithful to Jehovah; and by a life in tents must his brethren regain the hardihood and simple piety which their race had lost.

While Moses was thus leading Jethro's flocks in the Desert, and pondering the leading of that greater flock of which he was to be the Shepherd, the king of Egypt died;—that king who had adopted him as his grandson, and afterwards threatened his life on account of his homicide of the Egyptian whom he saw tyrannising over a Hebrew. It was early in the reign of his successor that Moses moved towards Egypt again; for the Exodus appears to have taken place in the fourth year of this Pharaoh,—Thothmes III.

This was his second journey over the peninsula of

Sinai. When his purposes were fixed and clear, he led back his flocks, and his family and servants, to Midian, and bade farewell to Jethro,—whom he met, the next time, under remarkable circumstances. He took his family with him ; but they turned back to Midian, and left him to proceed alone.—With what a new heart must he now have crossed these wilds ! Before, he was without a hope for his people or a purpose for himself, and those two hundred and fifty miles of rock and sand must have been a desert indeed ! Now, his new hopes and purposes, springing up wherever he turned his eyes in this future scene of his enterprise, must have made the wilderness blossom as the rose.—He did not enter Egypt alone ; for his elder brother met him. After consultation, they went together to the Hebrew district, Goshen, where their next business was to communicate their enterprise to the elders,—the heads of families who, as a remaining patriarchal custom, held such rule as now existed among the degraded people.

The third entrance of Moses upon the Desert is that which usually interests travellers most,—not only from its importance, but because modern travel follows its track. All the three were, as regarded Moses himself, equally interesting to me ; for I cared little for being certainly on his very track while the scene was, in all its grand features, that in which he lived. But here, in this third transit, there was the great new interest of sympathy with the people whom he led. What this interest and sympathy may grow to is perhaps inconceivable to those at home who have only the vague and dim idea of the Desert that I had before I lived in it.

As everybody knows, learned men differ about the

road the Israelites took in leaving their Egyptian abodes. No one knows exactly where Goshen was, or where the fugitives crossed the Red Sea. It is not necessary to go over the arguments here, as I have no wish to prove that in the first instance we followed the Hebrew track. Most of our party, I believe, were convinced that we did; and among those so convinced, were the clergymen. I do not see that sufficient evidence exists to give even a preponderance of probability, and I have therefore no opinion on the subject. When once on the other side of the Gulf of Suez, the route is, for the most part, clear enough. The doubt is between two routes from the Nile to the Red Sea;—that by which travellers now go straight from Cairo to Suez, and the more southerly one called Wadec-el-Tiheh,—the Valley of the Wandering. This name shows which way tradition points out.

If the reader thinks it worth while here to look at a map, he will see that a valley runs, first south-east and then east, from the Nile, a little below Cairo, to the Red Sea, issuing at the bold promontory, Ras Attaka. Dr. Kitto and other learned speculators on the question distrust the tradition which has named this the Valley of the Wandering, and believe that it is the way by which Pharaoh hoped to drive the Hebrews back to the Nile. On this supposition, the Egyptian host followed the Hebrews to the head of the Gulf, and then southwards down its western shore, till the great headland, Ras Attaka, stopped their march, and there seemed nothing for them to do but to return to Goshen by the Wadec-el-Tiheh, which opened to their right hand.

However this may be, it was by the Wadee-el-Tiheh that we quitted the Nile, having the Djebel Attaka on our left hand, and a lower range of hills on the right. The two routes are about equally good for travelling purposes ; and very good was the one we went by ; hard gravel for the most part, or a firm pebbly ground, over which our attendants walked with as much ease as our camels.—And how many scores of miles did I walk in the Desert, during those five weeks ! I found, as some others did, the motion of my camel more and more fatiguing and disagreeable, all the way ; and, being at home a great walker, I had recourse, more and more, to my own feet,—little heeding even the heat and thirst in comparison with the annoyances of camel-riding. I have often walked from ten to fifteen miles in the noon hours, continuously, and of course at the pace of the caravan,—sometimes over an easy pebbly track,—sometimes over mountain passes,—sometimes cutting my boots to pieces on the sharp rocks ; but always giving up when we came to deep sand. Walking in deep sand in the Arabian Desert, at noonday, is a true purgatory : but there is little deep sand. We did not believe that more than one-fifth of our Desert route was sandy.

As for the camel-riding,—I could not have conceived of any exercise being so utterly exhausting. The swaying motion, causing an unintermitting pull upon one part of the spine, which can by no means be exchanged for another, becomes at last perfectly intolerable, though easy and agreeable enough at the outset.—I would never say a word to encourage any woman to travel in the Desert, if she must do it on the back of a

camel. If she can walk as I do, well and good; and I am told it is easy and agreeable to go on a donkey from Cairo to Jerusalem by the El Arish route. The footing is good enough for asses and horses in the Arabian Desert,—as the beautiful riding of the sheikhs may prove:—it is the want of water that is the difficulty. A woman who can walk far and easily, and bear the thirst which is the chief drawback on walking in the Desert, may set out for Mount Sinai without fear. I was so far from being injured by my Desert travelling that I improved in health from week to week, after having been very unwell in Egypt. There is nothing to fear for a traveller who can walk: but a woman who has no alternative, and must ride her camel all the way, should consider well before she undertakes the journey.—As for all palankeens, panniers, chairs and boxes,—they are wholly insufferable, adding to the evil of the camel-pace, which cannot be got rid of, pains and penalties of their own.

Walking in the Arabian Desert is made more easy than in any portion of desert I saw up the Nile by the tracks, which are very conspicuous and rarely intermit. During our whole journey from Cairo to Mount Sinai, I saw only three or four places where I should have had any doubt of the road, if I had been alone. The tracks are simply discolorations of the dark pebbly ground or rocky platforms in some places, and a hardening of the sand in others. Sometimes scores of these tracks run parallel, winding away before and behind, and dying out of sight on either hand, so as greatly to moderate the sense of retreat and solitude in the Desert.

I have mentioned, in the camel riding, the only drawback I remember on the pleasure of Desert travelling. It is a large item in the account: but my impression of all the rest is now as of one long delight.

CHAPTER II.

DESERT TRAVEL.—THE RED SEA.—SUEZ.—LANDING
IN ARABIA.—WELLS OF MOSES.

On the morning of Wednesday, February 24th, our camp was early astir. From this time, we found there was a competition among the dragomen of the different parties which should get their employers up and to breakfast first. Our party was usually the earliest. After our breakfast under the fading stars, we set off, and saw, as we looked behind us, the whole train winding on, between us and the brightening Pyramids and palms. We took our farewell view of the Nile Valley about eleven o'clock, when the last fragments of the purple line of vegetation disappeared behind the sand hills. From this day forward I obtained the management of my camel rein, which my driver was unwilling to give up. It was a single rein of woven goat's hair, heavy, but manageable. The head-gear of my camel was adorned with cowries. The creature was very sensitive, and the merest touch of the rein was enough to signify my pleasure. This was the easiest paced camel I rode; but I was induced to give it up, after a day or two, on account of its shying whenever I put up my umbrella, or opened map or book; and I saw it once run away at such a rate as to

reconcile me to having exchanged it for another. Our pace was very slow ;—on an average, and including stoppages, not exceeding two and a half or three miles an hour. It was not permitted to any one to lose sight of the caravan ; and the most heavily laden beasts of course determined the pace of all the rest. The slowest trot, or amble, was the most agreeable pace ; and we enjoyed the relief of this daily after luncheon when the baggage camels had gone forwards ; and I contrived it often at other times,—either by lingering till the train was nearly out of sight, and then overtaking it, or by pushing on where the tracks were clear, and I could not lose my way.

In the course of this first morning, we were allowed to dismount, to climb a sandy eminence called Moses' Seat, where, according to tradition, Moses took his station, to collect and review his multitude. The interest of the scene lay in its extreme wildness and desolation. Only three European parties had ever passed this way before us : and the novelty did, we believe, attract the attention of the roving Arabs who saw us, though they took good care that we should not see them. One dark head was this day observed peeping over the ridge of a sandhill ; and the fluttering of garments showed that the spy had taken flight to his hidden comrades. This man was the only person we saw between Bissateen and Suez, except one group of Bishara's friends. There was a popping of guns one evening after dark, on account, we were told, of Bedouens seen prowling about the camp : but whether this was true we do not know.

Our escort were all of Bishara's tribe ; and some had

faces as prepossessing as Bishara's own. They were all armed,—with pistols, or match-locks, or short swords. A number of spears, stuck points upwards on camels' backs, glittered in the sun. Some of the Arabs wore sandals of fish skin ; some were clothed in sheepskins, the woolly side inwards. All had their heads thickly covered, and where possible, with something white, at least in the middle of the day. For the most part, they trudged during the eight or nine hours of our daily travel ; but sometimes they rode in turn.

We were surprised at the variety of the scenery, this first day ; but we were not long in learning that there is endless variety in Desert travelling. To-day we saw wide valleys of hard gravel, narrow defiles, water-courses tufted with low tamarisks and dwarf thorny acacia, traces of pools left by former torrents, yellow slopes and mounds, dark and abrupt hills, and limestone eminences, embrowned with the soil, sometimes lofty enough to be called, in Egypt, mountains. The Djebel Rhaiboon is a black hill rising from amidst white sands ; and I was struck by the streaky character of some of the soil, on emerging from the White Valley upon the Wadee Beda,—resembling cloud-shadows so exactly that it surprised me to see that there was not a cloud in the sky.—The White Valley is a fine winding defile, overhung by steep and imposing hills ;—the very place for an assault from the Bedouens, if our troop had been less strong.

We stopped this afternoon in the midst of undulating pebbly ground, where our tents were fixed, to our great satisfaction, further apart than at Bissateen, allowing us more liberty and domestic convenience than when

we were all so huddled together that conversation was overheard from tent to tent, and we could not stir out without stumbling over tent ropes. Of all the variety of ground on which we encamped during these weeks, we liked the pebbly soil the best. Hard sand was convenient; but there black beetles abound. Soft sand has usually large stones strewn upon it, under which scorpions and other reptiles hide. Of course, rock will not do, as the tent pegs cannot be driven in. Short grass, on which we often encamped in Palestine, is pleasant; but then there are earwigs and ants. The prettiest perhaps was at Petra, where lilies were growing under my bed: but, on the whole, there is nothing like smooth pebbles,—our floor on this first night.—On the Thursday, we encamped in the midst of a very wide valley, or plain, where hills rose in the east, purple in the sunset. From a distant rising ground, the encampment looked beautiful,—the green and white tents, and the camels lying round them, diminished almost to dots, and the smoke from the fires of the Arabs rising like blue waving threads. One of the clergymen made an admirable coloured sketch of this, which conveyed, to my eye, a better idea of the vast expanse of a Desert valley, and the smallness of a large encampment, than any illustration I ever met with in books. The colouring would not be believed in England; but it was very true. On the Friday, when the evening was coming on, our Sheikh showed us what Arab running is. He ran before us for some miles, crossing occasionally from side to side, on the look out for some pool or well which he expected to find. His running appeared like a rather lazy trot

till his diminishing figure proved to us how fast he got over the ground. He seemed to lose no breath, and feel no fatigue; and when we came near enough for nods and signs, his bright genial face was all smiles and cheerfulness. He found the pool at last; but a party of Arabs were clustered about it. They were friends of his, and they kissed very heartily. Some of our escort drank a little of the water; but it looked like muddy milk, and was nearly exhausted by the first comers; so that we all preferred what was in our water skins.

It may be as well to give here the order of our day,—of an average day,—for the amusement of those who may wish to know what life in the Desert is like.

We four carried with us two tents, and two servants besides our escort. In the larger tent, we dined and spent the evening; and there Mrs. Y. and I slept. In the smaller tent, the gentlemen slept and wrote their journals. Our servants were Alee, the dragoman, and Abasis the cook,—a young man from Cairo who served us faithfully, and satisfied us in every respect. He spoke little English, but understood us sufficiently. His English speech amused us very much. He made “Very well” go almost as far as our “Bono” and “Non bono” in Egypt. These two words seemed all that he could command under the emotions of parting, when the time at last came for saying farewell.

“Now, Abasis, we must say good-bye.”

“Very well.”

“I shall not forget you, Abasis. I shall tell my friends of you, if they come to Egypt, that you may serve them as well as you have served us.”

“ Very well.”

“ You will not forget us, Abasis.”

“ Very well,—no.”

“ Here is a little present for you. If you like this handkerchief for a turban, you will wear it, and remember me.”

“ Very well.”

And all this time, his heart was full, while his words were so cool.—He carried under his charge what was called the Cook’s tent,—a small affair under which he stowed his apparatus, and where he and Alce slept. His cooking was, of course, done in the open air, on a trivet which held three pans for burning charcoal, over which he put his saucepans and baking-plate, and where he toasted our bread. He had charge of the stores;—the water-skins, flour, biscuit, macaroni, cheese, condiments, butter, eggs, oranges and preserved fruits; and the wine and ale. It was his business to buy, keep and kill the fowls and sheep. He worked harder than any one else of the party; and I wondered that he held out so well. He had to be up to cook our hot breakfast by five o’clock,—giving us always fowl or hashed mutton, eggs and toast. He had then to pack up his stores and apparatus, and help in striking the tents. His fatigue of mere travelling was, of course, the same as ours; and when we stopped, he worked as hard as any one at the severe labour of pitching the three tents, before cooking our dinner, which was always ready within two hours of our dismounting. He furnished the boiling water and toast at tea; by which time, he must often have been half dead. Yet I never saw his face otherwise than earnest and wide

awake ;—never knew him flag. It was really a pleasure to me, when I went out under the stars in the evening, to see him and Alee seated at their ease with their chibouques : but I believe they had seldom many minutes together of such rest.

At four o'clock in the morning, or earlier, Alee brought a light into our tent. Our tin basins had been filled the night before, and a pitcher of water and tin cups placed on the table. I always slept in what is called Levinge's bag,—an inexpressible comfort. Without it, I believe I should scarcely have slept at all ; but, as it was, I lay down every night, absolutely secure from insects of every kind. The flies might hang in clusters, like bees, on the tent pole : the beetles might run over the floor, and the earwigs hide themselves under the counterpane, and fleas skip among the camel furniture ; in my bag,—under its wide airy canopy, I was safe from them all, and from all fancies about them. It did not take me above five minutes in the day to put up and take down my canopy ;—a small price to pay for comfort and good sleep.—As soon as we opened our tent door, while I was taking down my bag, and the gimlets which, screwed into the tent poles, served us for pegs to hang our things on, Alee carried out our table and its tressles and the camp-stools, and Abasis laid the cloth for our open-air breakfast. We sat down to it at five or soon after, when the stars were growing pale, and the translucent dawn began to shine behind the eastern ridges, or perhaps to disclose the shecny sea. — While we were at our meal, we saw one after another of the other four parties come forth from their tents, and sit

down to table ;—the two bachelor companions being always the last. They were generally sitting down just when I was walking off in advance, with my courbash (hide whip) and bag,—containing map, book, note-book, goggles and fan. By this time, the tents were down, in due succession ; the camels were groaning and snarling, and the Arabs loading them,—with an occasional quarrel and fight, for variety.—Having learned from Alce or the Sheikh which way I was to go, I wandered forth ; and many a glorious view I had of the sunshine breaking in among the mountain fissures, while the busy and noisy camp yet lay in deep shadow below. One by one, the company would mount and follow, or Mr. W. with his book, and Mr. E. with his chibouque, would set forth on foot. In a line, or in pairs or groups, the camels, with their riders, would step out slowly ; and then the two lively young ladies, Miss K. and Miss C., would rouse theirs to a fast trot, and pass us all by.—When the sunshine reached me, or I had walked enough for the present, I put on my goggles, pulled my broad-brimmed hat over my eyes, and signed to my watchful camel driver. Then, down went the beast on its knees, and my driver set his foot on its neck while I sprang on, and settled myself with my stirrup and between my cushions, and stowed my comforts about me. When I had firm hold of the peg before and the peg behind, the creature was allowed to rise, and I sustained its three jerks,—two forward and one backward,—as well as I could.

At eleven o'clock, Abasis rode up with his tin lunch-box, to supply each of us with bread, cold fowl, or a hard egg, and a precious orange. Or, as oftener

happened, we looked out at that time for some shadow from a chance shrub, or in a rocky nook, where we might sit down to luncheon, while the baggage camels went forwards. That we might not be too far separated, we were not at first allowed more than twenty minutes for this rest.—It was a pretty sight,—the scattering about of the company among the patches and nooks of shade.

After three o'clock, the sheikh and dragomen began to look about, to choose our abiding place for the night. Where the sheikh points, or stands, or plants his spear, there it is to be. Then, as the camels arrive, they kneel down, and release their riders. This was the time of day when I found the heat the most oppressive;—in the half hour between arriving and taking possession of the tent. Within the tent too, it was often scarcely endurable till after dinner, though we looped up the sides, to obtain what air could be had. While the tent was preparing, I generally tried to sleep for a few minutes, on the sand or some neighbouring rock.—It required about half an hour to put up and furnish our tent. It was hard work to rear it, fix the poles, and drive in the pegs. Then Alce turned over every large stone within it, to dislodge scorpions, or other such enemies. This done, and the floor a little smoothed, he brought in the iron bedsteads and bedding, and the saddle-bags which held our clothes. Next came the mats;—two pretty mats, brought from Nubia, which covered the greater part of the floor. Then the table was placed in the middle, and four camp stools were brought; and basins of water, and a pitcher and cup. Mrs. Y. and I might now dress and

refresh ourselves, while Alee and Abasis put up the other two tents.

Mr. E. was to be envied at this time of day. He was in no hurry for his tent, for he was engrossed with his journal. He would secure a campstool, and lay his hand on his inkglass, and write as fast as possible till all was ready for him to dress; and then again perhaps till dinner. I could not do this. I was very well satisfied with myself if I wrote my journal after dressing and chibouque, and before dinner. I did it oftener between dinner and tea; and twice I let two or three days pass before I brought it up. One's journal is the chief nuisance in such travel as ours. There is no pleasure in it, one way or another. About one's duties at home there is always some pleasure, because one can do well what one undertakes: but one's journal is a perpetual irritation and mortification. It is such a mockery! When one's whole soul has been full and glowing for hours among marvellous scenes and new experiences, the only result in one's journal is a couple of pages of record which one wants to tear out as soon as written, in indignation at its poverty. But the deepest mortification of this kind is better than not keeping a journal. Anything is better than the shame and sorrow which must sooner or later ensue, when one finds the imagery of one's journey becoming hazy in the memory, and incidents and dates uncertain, and trains of thought no longer recoverable. It is worth any fatigue and annoyance at the moment, to secure certainty for all future time in regard to the knowledge obtained on the spot, and a complete array of pictures of the scenery one has passed through.—On the Nile,

it was easy to keep a full journal, and not wholly disagreeable. In the Desert, it required strong resolution; and I fear I should not have done it if I had not felt that the thoughts of this journey would be embittered to me for ever if I let it pass as a dream which must fade. It was purely for the peace of my own mind that I held myself to this irksome duty; for I had then no intention whatever of writing this book. Now I am, as I need not say, heartily thankful to be in possession of the mass of papers lying before me, in virtue of which the scenes and suggestions of my Eastern travel are securely mine for ever.—I say this in the hope that my testimony may strengthen some young future traveller against the indolence or humiliation which might interfere with his keeping a journal. He may be assured that however meagre his records and descriptions, he will be thankful for them hereafter; and that no present fatigue can be so painful as his future regrets if he entrusts to his memory what it will certainly let slip or spoil.—After all, there was some satisfaction in my journal,—at times when I had brought it up to the present moment, and when, as I was wiping my pen, a breath of air stole through the tent, promising a refreshing evening, and Alce appeared with the soup tureen, and the gentlemen came in, cheerful and hungry, and the bottle of ale (the greatest possible refreshment in the desert, except the chibouque) was visible in the corner. The thought of the finished journal certainly gave a zest to the dinner,—a relish which the two gentlemen must have daily enjoyed, for they were daily diligent.

Abasis gave us excellent dinners—good soup always:

mutton and fowls always; and these Arab cooks discover an astonishing variety of ways of cooking mutton. Then, there was macaroni, and potatoes; and always some nice pudding or fruit pie: excellent cheese; and a dessert of oranges and capital figs. Then the chibouques were brought,—at once the indispensable comfort and chief luxury of Eastern life:—a comfort of whose importance there no more conception can be formed at home than the people of the Guinea coast can appreciate our winter-clothing and fires. Then I usually went out, to survey the camp and scenery, and try to get rid of, or better endure, the sense of irritation from fatigue and heat which was at this hour the hardest to bear. By this time, the impression of that suffering is much weakened, while the images of the Arab fires, the dim tents and dark camels, the towering mountains fitfully lighted by the moon, or the dim plain, all canopied over by the lustrous heavens, or the quiet murmuring sea, flowing to my feet, are as fresh and delicious as ever. How often have I stolen round the camp, just beyond the tent ropes, enjoying the sight of the camel drivers before their fires, or the guard grouped about a lively story-teller! How often have I wandered away among the clefts of the rocks, or so far along the beach as that I might sing unheard all the beloved old music which I never utter at home, in our little island where one can never get out of earshot!—Sooner or later, however, Alee was seen going to our tent with the boiling kettle, and I was to be refreshed by tea. After tea, we were all more awake and lively,—just enough so to relish a rubber, though nothing else. A rubber kept us amused and

merry till ten o'clock; and I hardly think anything else would have done it. We cared little about it; but it was better than vainly trying to read, and being too sleepy to speak civilly.—At ten o'clock, the gentlemen went to their tent; Alee brought the water basins, and fastened down the tent curtain; and I put up my canopy, and made my bed, and was presently asleep.—Such was the ordinary course of our days in the Desert.

On the Saturday morning, our fourth day from Bissateen, I saw the Red Sea. At the moment when its distant gleam caught my eye, Miss C., who was at the head of the troop, turned and waved her hand, and there was an immediate press forward. The tracks turned northwards, and we were presently upon the beach. One and all dismounted, and snatched at the glorious shells which lay in heaps and banks along the shore. All pockets and bags were filled, and we were all presenting one another with the most exquisite shells we could find where all were beautiful. We were like a party of children; and like children, we were unaware of our folly. These shells were all dead, and must soon crumble into lime-dust. Nothing in our journey gave me a more distinct impression of our distance from home than this rapturous arrival on the shores of the Red Sea. Yet there were some serious thoughts connected with the spot. We were now at that point where many scholars believe that the Egyptian host overtook the Hebrews. All progress to the south was barred by the high promontory of Ataka, which juts into the sea; and if the Egyptians came from the north, the only escape for the Hebrews was by the way we had come, leading back only to the Nile.

The sea was blue and clear beyond description. Northwards, a narrow strip of shore lay between the sea and the brown, precipitous rocky mountains of the Egyptian coast. To the north-east, with the blue gulf between, lay the white line of Suez; and the Indian steamer was discernible, moored a few miles below. The Arabian hills, soft in their amethyst hues, shut in the whole to the east. It was an exquisite scene.

We proceeded northwards, and encamped on a charming spot,—on the hard sand below the mountains. The clear waters rippled up among the shelves of rock so as to tempt us irresistibly to bathe, though we were warned of the danger of sharks. Mrs. Y. and I could not believe that sharks would come into the shallows of the very shore; and we bathed accordingly; as I believe every one else did before the day was over; but we were told at Suez, the next morning, that the inhabitants never bathe; and that it is only rash strangers, ignorant of the ways of sharks, that venture to do so. On me, however, the warning was thrown away. I bathed whenever I could, in both gulfs; and we heard no more of sharks.

On Sunday, February 28th, we were to reach Suez in time for morning service: and, as the town was within sight, our own party pushed on before the others. It was starlight when I came out of the tent; and while we were at breakfast, the dawn disclosed the sheeny sea and the fissures of the gloomy mountains. We entered the gate of Suez between nine and ten o'clock, and were met by the agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, of which Mr. E. is a Director. Captain Linguist, the agent, showed us all possible

kindness, and rendered us every service he could think of. Among other things, he compelled us to accept his whole collection of shells, which he forwarded to Liverpool for us. To him it was, as he told us, a truly happy day. His ordinary intercourse with Europeans is necessarily very hasty and unsatisfactory. His office is to help the transit of India passengers; and they are always in a vast hurry, and anxious about their luggage. The talk with them is about carpet-bags, omnibuses and steamers. Till to-day he had not for many a month joined in worship, or heard a psalm, or sat down with his countrymen to quiet conversation, or taken them a leisurely walk. He will remember that Sunday, as I am sure we shall his kindness.

After a comfortable second breakfast at the hotel, which is kept by two Englishwomen, we went to an eminence near, where Captain Linguist pointed out to us the well whence only Suez obtains fresh water, and the first Station in the Desert; and, to the north, the end of the Gulf;—a stretch of two miles or so of shallow water. A few small vessels lay here, and along both shores to the southwards. Captain Linguist has followed out the traces of the ancient canal; and he can find no evidences that it was ever used, or even finished; and he believes therefore that it can afford no precedent for the proposed new one, even supposing the state of the waters and shore to be unaltered;—which nobody, I believe, does suppose.

We wrote letters in the evening, being glad of this last opportunity, for several weeks, of forwarding news to England.

The next morning, March 1st, Captain L. took us in

his boat over to the Arabian side. The wind was so light that we proceeded at the rate of less than two miles an hour; and the rest of our company passed us, and landed two hours before us. The baggage and escort had crossed the night before. The view of Suez from the water was finer than I should have supposed possible for such a miserable place: but such an atmosphere adorns every thing with the highest charms of colour. The light on the sides of the vessels, on the two minarets, and through the shallow waters, was a feast. The coral-shoals below, red and dark, contrasted with the pale green above the sandy bottom.

It was one o'clock when we landed; and the whole caravan, provisions and all, were gone on, without leaving word where we were to stop. Our camels and dragoman were awaiting us; but neither food, cook nor guide. Captain Linguist was delighted to improvise a luncheon for us at his country-house, at the Wells of Moses. He showed us his garden, which is well irrigated, and as productive as a garden can be in such a place. He showed us the ancient wells, all shrouded in bushy palms; and pointed out indications of moisture which encourage him to search for a fourth well. Of the three which we saw, one is built up with massive and ancient masonry. We were glad that our kind entertainer had such a resource as even this place. When weary with the solitude and irksomeness of his position, he comes over here, and drives away blue devils with a gallop over the sand hills, and plans of improvement about his country-house. The luncheon he gave us was extraordinary enough in its place to deserve mention. Here, among these dreary sands of

the Arabian shore, we had butter from Ireland, ale from England, wine from Spain, ham from Germany, bread and mutton from Cairo and Suez, cheese from Holland, and water from Madras! Truly, the dwellers on the Red Sea may well be advocates of free trade.— At half-past five p.m. Captain L. helped us to mount, and saw us on our way.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNEY TO SINAI.

THE heat was still excessive, and we were faint and fatigued at this evening hour, when we should have been sitting down to rest; and our whole day's ride was still before us;—a ride of twenty miles, as it turned out. Yet I look back with singular pleasure to that first Arabian ride. We might go as fast as we liked, being free from the baggage camels; and we were to ride as quietly as we could. So I put my camel to a trot, and pushed on, to see what I could see in Arabia. I looked out for Bedouens on the hills; and many times I thought I saw them: but it always turned out to be a round stone instead of a man's head, or some fitful shadow on the slopes, instead of a crouching Arab. In only one instance do I believe now that I saw a spy watching from behind a ridge. The large, glorious sun presently went down clear behind the sands to our right; and just before, the full moon had come stealing up behind the eastern ridge,—at first a pale ghost, soon to brighten to a golden orb. Then I was struck by the sheen on the pebbly slopes, almost as bright as on water: and all the way I was perplexed by the altered proportions of every object in such a place and light. When I looked back, it made me almost

breathless to see our little party,—only four riders besides myself, moving in a space like that; and yet every ridge and stone looked huge till we came up to it. Two camel drivers were running beside us. When we had been riding above two hours, one of them began to scream horribly, and utter shrill calls; and from under the next shadowy slope an Arab sprang out, close to me as I rode ahead. It was only one of our escort, who had been left behind by the Sheikh to look for us. He told Alec that we had yet some way to go; and a long way indeed it seemed. We told one another when it was eight o'clock, and when it was nine, and still we trotted on, seeing nothing through the uncertain and perplexing light but the same wilds of rock and sand. At last, as I was gazing forwards intently, I saw a little flash, apparently on the very horizon; and then a report followed. The Sheikh had fired a gun for our guidance. We came to some tufts of tamarisk and other low shrubs in a water-course; and amidst these were the tents. Our over-dressed dinner was on table immediately,—that is, soon after ten o'clock; but Mrs. Y. and I craved tea, which presently revived us.—We now found that we had been the least distressed of the whole European party. Our comrades had found, on landing, that the Arab company had gone on: they had no kind friend at the Wells of Moses to give them luncheon: they had travelled the whole day without food, and were two hours and a half longer on the road than we.

The next morning we first encountered a high wind in the desert. The sand met us in streams. As riding under such a powdering was more disagreeable than

walking, when one could occasionally turn one's back to the wind, and take breath, I walked about eight miles; and by that time, the wind had moderated a little.—As I was afterwards riding ahead, I saw a palm among some sand hills; and my camel quickened its pace, and needed no persuasion to carry me up to the tree. More shrubby palms were now seen growing about a chink in the hill-side, where a little pool of water appeared. It was rather bitter, but drinkable. Our camels soon reduced it to sandy dregs. They thrust their heads together eagerly, and pushed hard for a drink; but I observed that each drank very little. From its bitterness, this well is called by some people the Marah of Scripture: but it is not generally supposed to be the actual place.—On referring to Burckhardt, I find, however, that he believes this to be the Marah of Exodus xv. 23. He says:—“We passed the well of Howara, round which a few date trees grow. Niebuhr travelled the same route, but his guides probably did not lead him to this well, which lies among hills, about two hundred paces out of the road. The water of the well of Howara is so bitter, that men cannot drink it; and even camels, if not very thirsty, refuse to taste it.”—It was probably diluted by the rains, (which here fall and flow very copiously) when we tasted the water. We were nearly two months earlier in the season than Burckhardt; and we saw everywhere traces of recent floods in the water-courses. Burckhardt continues:—

“From Ayoun Mousa to the well of Howara we had travelled fifteen hours and a quarter. Referring to this distance it appears probable that this is the desert of

three days mentioned in the Scriptures to have been crossed by the Israelites immediately after their passing the Red Sea, and at the end of which they arrived at Marah. In moving with a whole nation, the march may well be supposed to have occupied three days; and the bitter well at Marah, which was sweetened by Moses, corresponds exactly with that of Howara. This is the usual route to Mount Sinai, and was probably therefore that which the Israelites took on their escape from Egypt."

The next day, (Wednesday, March 3d) I discovered how completely I had been possessed with the spirit of the desert by the sort of feeling with which I greeted a single tree. It was only a poor thorny-acacia, low and wide-spreading: but its importance to eye and mind cannot be judged of by those who have never seen a solitary tree,—the only vegetation within a wide horizon. As I was riding ahead, I waved my courbash to those behind, lest any body should miss the sight. But in a little while, there was much more to see. I came upon a clump of palms;—those bushy palms of the desert which are to my eye so much more beautiful than the tall trimmed palms,—trimmed for date-bearing,—which we see in cultivated regions, and in all pictures of the East. In the midst of this clump was a well; and along the deep water-course, for a considerable distance, tamarisks, acacias and palms were scattered and clumped. As several of the party dismounted here, I walked up the water-course, as far as I dared, till the sight of some strange Arabs, looking at me from behind the trees, turned me back.—Soon after remounting, we came upon a string of muddy

pools in the water-course, where our camels drank. Everywhere in the desert, we were surprised by the number of water-courses, and the traces of torrents. We were almost hourly riding over or near that caked soil, curling up in large slices, which tells of a recent flood.

Here, and in far drier parts of the desert, we saw dragon-flies in abundance;—a sign, probably, of the rainy season being just over. It is curious that while no rain falls in the almost parallel and not distant Nile Valley, there should be abundant rains in this peninsular, usually in December and January. We saw a good many pigeons, and a few other birds; and under almost every bush, were the holes of the little jerboas.

Our place of encampment this evening was very charming. In a nook made by mountains meeting at right angles, the vanished torrent seemed to have spread abroad, rather than to have turned a sharp corner, while confined within banks. Still, this was in a valley; only the valley widened a little at this turn. In this nook grew palms in clumps; and there were little strips of grass bordering the tiny runnels in the sand; and in the crevices of the precipitous rocks were tufts of weeds, of a really dazzling green.—The scenery the next morning was transporting. I walked forwards for a few miles,—past a prodigious black rock which rose in grand contrast with the brown mountains; the sea, of the deepest blue, opening out at the end of the gorge, and bounded afar by the Egyptian hills, dressed in heavenly hues. We came down upon the sea, and went in and out, between it and the mountains, many times. The rocks were the most diversified I ever saw.

I noted them on the spot as being black, green, crimson, lilac, maroon, yellow, golden and white : and their form was that of a whole host of cones.—Then we entered upon the wilderness of Sin, and the plain was stony towards the striking entrance of Wadee Shelal. We had now left Burckhardt's track. He took the more northerly route to Sinai, by Wadee Sheikh, but returned to Cairo by the one we were on. We went by the more southerly track, which gave us the advantage of skirting Mount Serbal.

Some time after lunching under a projecting rock, we undertook the great pass in Wadee Shelal. It was necessary to dismount,—not so much on account of the steepness of the ascent, which was in fact a long zigzag staircase, as of its narrowness. A baggage-camel filled the space completely ; and if one of these should press against a ridden camel, the rider's limbs would probably be crushed against the rock. I led my camel up the pass ; and when I had crossed the ridge, my position seemed strange enough :—alone, leading my camel in a hollow way, where the heat was like the mouth of a furnace, and where I should hardly have supposed myself on our own familiar earth, but for the birds which flew up in the sunshine, and the dragon-flies that flitted by. I now seemed to feel, for the first time, true pity for the wandering Hebrews. What a place was this for the Hebrew mothers with their sucking babes ! They who had lived on the banks of the never-failing Nile, and drunk their fill of its sweet waters, must have been aghast at the aspect of a scene like this, where the eye, wandering as it will, can see nothing but bright and solemn rocks and a sky without

a cloud. As I thought of their fevered children imploring water, and their own failing limbs where there was no shade in which to rest, I could imagine the agony of the Hebrew fathers, and well excuse their despairing cry, "Give us water that we may drink! Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of the land of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? . . . Wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us unto this evil place? It is no place of sced, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates: neither is there any water to drink." They were here in the early days of their wandering, when the freshness of the Nile Valley was vivid in their remembrance; and it was later in the year than when we travelled this way. To them, the sun was more scorching than to us; and the caked soil of the water-courses had become dry dust; and, as Burekhardt found at a yet earlier season, the scanty foliage of the thorny-acacia was all so dead and crisped with the heat as to ignite with a spark. The faith of the meditative and instructed Moses must have been strong to bear him up in such a scene: and what must have been the clamour and despair of the slavish multitude, whose hope and courage had been extinguished by that bondage which yet left their domestic affections in all their strength! At every step, we found the scriptural imagery rising up before our minds,—the imagery of overshadowing rocks, sheltering wings, water-brooks, and rain filling the pools:—even we, with all our comforts and our well-filled water-skins, relieved our mental oppression with imagery like this. But the poor Hebrews had no scriptures, no faith, no promises that

they could yet receive. To them, it was all evil and no hope. Well might Moses himself here sink below the level of his purposes, and cry "What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me." When my eye caught at the tufts of grass peeping from under the stones, and a green bush here and there in the ravines, I remembered that they would be gone before the summer, and that there were none when the Hebrews passed by.

It was at the end of one of these parched wadees that we encamped that night,—encompassed with precipitous rocks. The red granite mountains we were now in the midst of, are massive and awful beyond any other mountains I ever saw. The sunset lights, and the morrow's dawn dressed them in splendour, but scarcely relieved their gloom.—This had been a remarkable day; but the morrow was yet more so.

I was out at dawn on the morning of the 5th, and by sunrise I was walking forwards alone, watching the sun-floods which streamed down between the fantastic peaks of the mountains. Enormous blocks of red granite lay beside the tracks; and from their crevices the birds flew up into the light. I had been warned not to walk far; and I soon learned why.—Presently after mounting, I was surprised to see, on the left hand face of rock, two tablets smoothed for inscriptions. On one, the inscription had been effaced: the other was covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics.—Bishara came up, and pointed to a wadee before us which diverged from the main route,—Wadee Magara,—and here he evidently wanted us to go. We turned in there: and I will just mention, for the guidance for any future traveller, where

the Egyptian relics are to be looked for. Passing into Wadee Magara from Wadee Gennee, a patch of green shrubs soon appears on the right; and further on, a single thorny-acacia is seen on the same side. Here the traveller must dismount, and climb the steep and difficult mountain side immediately opposite the tree. If he sets out in the angle, he can hardly miss his object.—On the left hand slope are two tablets of hieroglyphics, besides some attempts at excavation which have been discontinued. On the right hand slope of the recess are four more; and further round on the same side, still two more, under the shelter of a projecting ledge:—one might say, in a little cave. Of these two, one is finished; the other only just begun. What can these inscriptions mean,—high up such a wild, retired mountain, and unfinished?

Niebuhr discovered, and after him Laborde and other travellers visited, a group of Egyptian mortuary stones (as is supposed) near Naszeb, on the more northern road which Burckhardt took: and an account of them is given by Laborde.* Of this group Burckhardt says † — “It seems to be a custom prevalent with the Arabs in every part of the desert, to have regular burial-grounds, whither they carry their dead, sometimes from the distance of several days’ journey. The burying-ground seen by Niebuhr near Naszeb, which, as I have already mentioned, I passed without visiting, . . . appears to have been an ancient cemetery of the same kind, formed at a time when hieroglyphical characters were in use among all the

* Journey through Arabia Petrea, &c., p. 80 (English translation).

† Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 482.

nations under Egyptian influence. As there are no countries where ancient manners are so permanent as in the desert, it is probable that the same customs of sepulture then prevailed which still exist ; and that the burial-ground described by Niebuhr by no means proves the former existence of a city."

I wish some one who can read the Egyptian hieroglyphics would go and examine into this matter. Laborde mentions tablets slightly,—the tablets which we saw, and supposes that some attempts to find copper may have been made here, which might attract Egyptian workmen. If such works were ever begun here, they must have been immediately relinquished.

We retraced our steps to the entrance of the wadee, and then, turning to the left, entered upon Wadec Mokatteb,—the Written Valley. I was so busy thinking over what we had just seen, that I forgot to ask the name of this new wadee, or to take heed to what was about me, when a rock turning off to the left caught my eye, and roused me at once. It was covered with inscriptions, from base to summit ; —covered as thick as the letters would stand ; not only on the smooth parts of the stone, but wherever the characters could be put. I was the last of the troop ; and they had certainly all passed by without noticing this rock. I shouted, and waved my courbash to bring them back ; they turned, but did not come. They all drew to the side of the wadee ; and I presently found that they too had discovered wonderful rocks. For six miles or so now, we passed between rocks inscribed all over with characters which nobody can read.—They are irregularly carved ;—some larger,

some smaller, from (I think) nearly a foot high to half an inch. Those of us who had good sight perceived that there were inscriptions much higher up than we had been given to understand by travellers. On many a smooth natural tablet, high up on the face of the mountain, could I see mysterious lines, like those below, when the sunlight or shadow fell favourably: but the unbroken mass of inscriptions was between the base and a height of twenty feet.—Almost every large stone which lay in the valley also bore similar records. Some were rather lightly traced, — little more than scratched,—on the stone: but many were deep cut.

This character was unknown at the time when Justinian built the Convent of Mount Sinai; and it cannot yet be read. At first, the discoverers had a natural hope that these gravings on the rock might prove to be the work of the Hebrews: but that idea has long been given up. From very early ages, the mountains we were now approaching had been sacred places and objects of pilgrimage; and after the Christian Era, many thousands of Christians lived in this peninsular,—some in monasteries, and very many as anchorites, scattered through the valleys and among the rocks about Serbal and Sinai. For some hundreds of years, pilgrims trooped hitherwards; and the learned now suppose the inscriptions in Wadee Mokatteb and other places to record the names and blessings of pilgrims. If so, it is as desirable as ever to find a key to this character, that we may learn what unknown people,—or people who wrote in an unknown character,—shared, in former

days, the Jewish and Christian faith.—In the transactions of the Royal Society a large number, (I think 187) of these inscriptions are published, among which are nine Greek and one Latin : but these do not help us to assign the rest to their origin. Dr. Lepsius conjectures these to be the work of Shepherds : but one does not see why, in that case, they should be found only in the way to sacred localities ;—for instance, as far as Rephidim and El Erbayn at the foot of Horeb, and no higher up the Wadec el Ledja.

Among these legends, and in many another spot hereabouts, are drawings on the rock which may well be the work of Bedoucen goat-herds. They are scratches, rather than carvings, of camels, goats and gazelles ;—hugely-laden, crooked camels,—tumble-down goats, and most clumsy or scraggy gazelles. They are amusing, but not at all mysterious.

In the afternoon, we found the tufts of desert shrubs becoming thicker and larger ; the tamarisks expanded into trees, and in an angle of the valley, unpruned palms showed themselves before us. Bishara and the dragomen began to look about for a resting-place ; and they told us we were entering Wadec Feiran. As we turned that angle, we came upon inclosures ;—the first we had seen since leaving the Wells of Moses. Thick palm-groves now rose before us ; and it was pleasant to ride in among them, past walls and little flocks of goats tended by Arabs, over patches of damp soil, and under the declivities of Mount Serbal. Serbal rose grandly over all ; and it let down little streamlets, along whose margin fresh grass ran in

lines beside the tracks.—In one spot, there was seen a fine sweep of the mountain ridge, where it is natural for those who believe this to have been the mountain of the Law to see in vision the gathering of the clouds and the flashing of the lightnings. But there is no plain below from which the Hebrew multitude could have beheld this: nor is there anywhere round the mountain a space which could afford the spectacle to any large number of people.—I shall not enter upon the controversy about the spot of the giving of the Law. I am convinced that there is no evidence which can decide the matter; and that there never can be, because the premises can never be fixed. While every body believes the general fact of the leading of the Hebrews to this region, in order to prepare them for their future nationality, no one can say how much of the details is strictly historical, and how much legendary. The numbers and dates of the narrative are regarded by all the learned, I believe, as untenable; as given, after the Hebrew manner, in the large, and in established terms, understood by Hebrew hearers, but altogether misleading to those who would take them as literally as if they had been assigned after, instead of before, the origin of true history. Learned men, who are up to the mark of historical science in our day, know that the Hebrews and their followers could not have amounted to two millions of people when they left Egypt, and that the “forty years” and “forty days” assigned to a variety of transactions is not to be taken literally, nor was ever meant to be so: and they are aware that it is in vain to fix

upon any particular mountain peak as that from which the Law was given.

It is quite another question which was the sacred mountain in the belief of early times. In regard to this there is abundance of evidence. It is clear that Serbal and Sinai were both sacred mountains, and objects of pilgrimage from a very early age. The traveller cannot but see this on the spot: and if he is further disposed to occupy himself with the speculation which of the mountains of the region was in the mind of the writers of Exodus, he will do as travellers have hitherto done,—fix upon the peak which in his view answers the most nearly to the points of the narrative. Of the few travellers who have been there, the greater number have pointed out some fresh spot which struck their fancy, in the absence of all evidence as to which the writers had in view.—If I were to do this, it would not be Serbal that I should fix upon; because there is, as I said, no space within view of its peaks and ridge whence any large number could fix their gaze on any one suitable point of the mountain. Yet it is clear that, for some reason or other, Serbal was largely resorted to by devotees and pilgrims, and probably through many ages;—as was also Sinai.—Many inscriptions are found on the rocks near the summit of Serbal; and there is a road up to its peak. In Wadee Feiran the rocks are dotted with caves,—the abodes and tombs of ancient anchorites and devotees. What traces of sanctity remain about Sinai, we shall presently see.

We wandered on in the valley for about a mile beyond the spot I mentioned as affording a fine view

of the pinnacles of Serbal; and then we took up our rest in a truly delicious nook. Serbal was almost overhead, and other mountains enclosed us round. On the slope behind us were the remains of the ancient town known to have existed here; and at its base ran a little streamlet in a mossy channel, overhung with tamarisks and palms. Caves yawned in all the precipices round; and soon, when the large moon rose, the whole was like a rich dream,—except for the voices and laughter of a party of our Arabs round a great fire which gleamed upon the high screen of tamarisks which sheltered them from the night breeze.

In the morning I was out in time to see some of the stars go down behind the mountain peaks, and others fade in the dawn. It was so warm here that I put off my cloak while at breakfast in the open air before sunrise. By six o'clock I was walking forwards, wishing to examine some of the caves. Those to which I climbed were mere cells, rude and unshapen; just answering to one's childish notions of an anchorite's cell. Some had as many as four chambers, I was told; but none that I visited had more than two. I observed a seat apparently cut into the rock on the margin of the runnel, where it spreads into a brook; and I wondered who planted it there; for it was too convenient and pleasant to have been done with the good-will of anchorites.—Then I walked through palm-groves, and in and out among inclosures, delighting my eyes with the asphodel which blossomed richly in the crevices of the rocks;—sometimes within reach, so that I had actually bouquets to present to my friends when they overtook me. There is nothing like the words written

down at the time ; so here are those of my journal of that date. "Paths through the tamarisks ; and Arab tents, and black goats and swathed goat-herds ; and the first sunlight dropping in through the mountain clefts,—golden beyond description, and making golden the waving palm tops in the illumined nook I looked down upon. On turning round, I saw our loaded camels coming winding through the tall stems behind me, and their drivers among the trees. How must Feiran (if then like what it is now) have appeared to the Israelites after their wandering in the arid places of the Desert ! But it is not fertile, as some authors say, who mean by that that it is cultivated. I saw nothing grown by husbandry ; and the soil is sandy as elsewhere. Tender grass and cresses spring in the brook ; and there are tufts of herbage and weeds in the rock-clefts : but the palms are unpruned, and all is wild, however sweet.—As we pursued the wadee, the vegetation subsided into the usual Desert tufts ; and the way was hot and dry. Our last views of Mount Serbal were very fine as it towered,—all in lilac hues and blue shadows,—above the nearer mountains behind us. Before us were rising all the morning, the peaks of the Sinai nucleus."

It was this which made that Saturday, the 6th of March, a remarkable day to us. On this day, we travelled from Wadee Feiran to Mount Sinai, and at night we rested in the convent.

It must be understood that the whole cluster of mountains before us is called Sinai ;—the whole region which rises above the plain. At a considerable elevation, a wide plain spreads, out of which branch many

wadees. From this plain springs a cluster of rocky mountains, at whose base lies the convent of Mount Sinai.—Further,—this cluster, as seen from the plain, is called at this day (however it might be formerly) Horeb: and when the heights of Horeb are attained, other mountains or peaks are seen to spring, which are invisible from below. The two principal peaks are those of Moses, or Sinai Proper, and Saint Catherine. Thus, there are two great ascents to reach the base of Sinai Proper: and the first of these we accomplished this morning. As my journal says—“We followed wadees, crossed low ridges, dipped down into a deep, narrow, tufted valley, drank water from our skins, crossed and emerged, and entered upon the defile which leads to the plain of Sinai. What a rugged and steep ascent it is,—winding always, but never with any terrific depth below! I kept my seat till we reached our lunching-place, in the shadow of rocks, whence we saw the rear of our caravan creeping over the levels below. Then I walked some way, but was soon glad to mount my camel, which seemed well at home in this chaos. The colouring of the rocks was as vivid and striking as at any former point of our journey; and the myrtle green of the shale was relieving to the eye.—We came out at last upon the plain where one would like to think the Hebrews were encamped; a level expanse of sand, tufted with Desert plants; and out of it springs, directly before us, the cluster of peaks which is now called Horeb. On this plain were Arabs and goats; and a long shadow was flung across it, below Horeb, from the western mountain.—Soon, as we speeded over the plain, we came in sight of the convent, lying beautifully in the

deep shadow of Horeb, aslant up the western slope,—and with tall cypresses and some greener trees springing from within its fortress-like walls. It was very beautiful from this distance,—snug in its extremely narrow valley.—We saw to the right, at the base of the mountain, the second garden of the convent, with cypresses and green foliage like the other.—Next, we passed the Arab cemetery,—a crowd of little rude stones.—Then we rode over shelves of rock up to the convent, and past its inclosure walls, which are of various dates and materials, but chiefly of large crude brick, with occasional heavy blocks of stone.—Some travellers' tents were under the walls, and groups of Arab boys were loitering about. The windlass at the place of entrance was at work, and two monks looked down upon us from their terrace on the walls.—Mr. Y. went up by the windlass, after his letter, to present his respects to the Prior. We looked upon his swinging ascent with some wonder what we should do, if the other entrance of which we had heard should be closed against strangers now. But a monk soon invited us within a well-secured postern, and lighted us with his lantern through a dark passage, and then led us through the green and blossomy and terraced garden, and up from one stair-case and platform to another, till we arrived at the strangers' corridor, whence we could overlook much of the curious complication of buildings and spaces which constitute the interior of the convent of Mount Sinai."

CHAPTER IV.

CONVENT OF MOUNT SINAI.—ASCENT OF DJEBEL
MOUSA.—ASCENT OF HOREB.

THE first thing known of the settlement of this place and neighbourhood is that the Empress Helena, in the fourth century, built a small church over the spot where the Burning Bush grew. Who there was to tell the Empress where the Bush grew, is not known; nor how the tradition had been preserved for nearly two thousand years. Several small convents were built in the peninsula, after Helena's church began to attract devotees: but the Bedouens were so dangerous and troublesome that the Christians of the region petitioned Justinian to build them a fortified convent. He sent workmen, Burckhardt tells us,* from Constantinople and Egypt, with orders to build an impregnable monastery on the top of Djebel Mousa,—that peak being in his day supposed to be the one from which the Law was given. There being no water at that height, the workmen built the convent at the foot of Horeb, inclosing within its walls the well at which it is said Moses was the first to drink.—The monks believe that Justinian gave the whole of the peninsula to their establishment; and that so many sacred buildings and

* Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 545.

hermitages arose in consequence, that six or seven thousand monks and hermits were inhabiting the region at the time of the Mohammedan conquest.

The worship is now solely that of the Greek church : but there was a time when many forms of religion were on an equality here. Beside the great Greek church, stood the Mosque, whence the Muezzin might, within the walls of this Christian convent, call the Faithful to prayer. The Latins, Armenians and Syrians had chapels also : but the Greek is the only one now in use. There were about thirty monks when we were there, some of whom appeared to have suffered from the severity of their rule. They have an establishment at Cairo, which is a resource to them against much want and danger which they must otherwise suffer under. Their corn comes from Cairo ; most of the soil for their several gardens comes thence on the backs of camels. These gardens are of great importance to them,—not only because they depend on them for their supply of vegetables, while never touching animal food, and because they propitiate the Bedouens with fruit, but because their reputation largely depends on the great quantity of medicinal and sacred herbs which they send into the world every season. The gardens are carefully cultivated, terraced, and well irrigated. When we were there, the blossomy almonds and peaches, and the vivid green of the herb beds, among the tall dark cypresses and spreading olives, were a feast to the eye.

Before we went, we called this the Convent of St. Catherine, as everybody does. We had read of it under that name, and seen that name under every

print of the place that had come before our eyes. Our surprise was therefore great when a monk who had taken the vows twenty years before declared that he did not know it by that name. Being asked whether the convent had nothing to do with St. Catherine, he replied, only by the bones of a hermitess, named Catherine, having been found on the mountain above the convent which bears her name. Perplexed by this, I was yet more surprised when I observed a little Catherine-wheel rudely carved over one of the posterns: and a picture of the saint, leaning on her wheel, in the library, with her name at length. In the chapel also her relics lie in state,—those bones which were found on the mountain-top, and were brought hither by the monks a few years after the establishment of the convent. The monk, however, stuck to his declaration that the convent had no connexion with St. Catherine: and we suspected there was some misunderstanding between him and the interpreter, — our dragoman. Since my return, however, I have found the solution of our difficulty in Burckhardt,* who seems to elucidate everything he touches. He says:—"M. Seetzen has fallen into a mistake in calling the convent by the name of St. Catherine. It is dedicated to the Transfiguration, or, as the Greeks call it, the Metamorphosis, and not to St. Catherine, whose relics only are preserved here."—We asked the monk what, according to him, the name of the convent was; and he replied, the Convent of Mount Sinai,—saying nothing about the Transfiguration.

There is a large mosaic representation of the Trans-

* *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, p. 553.

figuration in the dome of a chapel ; a curious specimen of art to be seen in such a place. But the pride of the brethren is in the chapel of the Burning Bush. We were desired to enter it barefoot : but as I had laced boots on, I ventured to disobey, and passed without remark. Our monk-guide reverently bent under the altar, and removed a silver plate which covers the spot where the Bush grew. The Bush itself, however, flourishes elsewhere, in one of the courts,—a shrub of the Ribes kind, I think, which was sprouting vigorously. The monk, who plucked some twigs for those who would accept them, said with enthusiasm that it had never drooped ; “ and now,” he continued, “ that it has flourished for three thousand years, I am sure it will never die.”—The library contains a large number of Greek books of monkish devotion, and a few Arabic manuscripts, of which Burekhardt gives some account. I picked up there an odd volume of the “Spectator,” left, no doubt, by some traveller. Its title-page and fly-leaf are scribbled over with pious curses by the Rev. Joseph Wolff, who begins his vituperation with “He who left this book in this place merits to be beaten with forty stripes save one,” &c. &c.

The monks sell Manna to strangers, in little round boxes, wherein it coagulates to a mass, but melts when exposed to the sun. This substance exudes from the tamarisk in summer, and is most plentiful after the most copious rains. It drops upon the ground from the twigs of the tamarisk, which grows abundantly in the neighbouring wadees. The manna is picked up before sunrise, as it melts afterwards. The Arabs boil and strain it, and keep it in skins, to serve instead of

honey: and very nourishing aliment it is said to be, if used sparingly. Its appearance is not very tempting.

The monks make palm brandy in abundance, and drink it too. The pale-faced and shrunken guide who took us up the mountain could not be induced to eat cold fowl: it would be a sin to touch animal food; but he took a brave pull at the brandy bottle. Such are the differences of morals among Christians!

I think the unfavourable position of the convent must be partly answerable for the pale faces of most of its inhabitants; though poor diet and severe vigils, and apprehensions from the Bedoueens have, no doubt, much to do with it. Mrs. Y. and I had the best room in the convent,—spacious, clean, and with plenty of windows; but I could not sleep; and the sense of oppression, while within the walls, was remarkable. This is not to be wondered at, as a free circulation of air is impossible. The valley is so narrow as to be filled up, within twenty feet or so, by the building, which slopes up the mountain backwards; and the south end is closed in, at a short distance, by a precipitous barrier. It is open only to the north; and how the place can be endured in summer, I cannot conceive. The elevation of the whole region, it is true, is such that the season is more backward than that of Cairo by two months: but this elevation can avail little to an abode placed in an abyss of bare rocks. I was struck with this the first night, when I went out into our corridor, after ten o'clock, to see the moon come up between two peaks,—her light being already bright on the western summits. Still and sweet as was the scene,—the air being hazy with moonlight in this rocky

basin, there was something oppressive in the nearness of the precipices, and I could not but wonder what state of nerve one would be in during summer, and in seasons of storm. The lightning must fill this space like a flood; and the thunder must die hard among the echoes of these steep barriers. As for the thunder, Burckhardt heard a curious tale here. He says:—“Several Bedoucens had acquainted me that a thundering noise, like repeated charges of heavy artillery, is heard at times in these mountains; and they all affirmed that it came from Om Shomar. The monks corroborated the story, and even positively asserted that they had heard the sound about mid-day, five years ago, describing it in the same manner as the Bedoucens. The same noise had been heard in more remote times, and the Ikonómos, who had lived here forty years, told me that he remembered to have heard the noise at four or five separate periods. I inquired whether any shock of an earthquake had ever been felt on such occasions, but was answered in the negative. Wishing to ascertain the truth, I prepared to visit the mountain of Om Shomar.”—He did so, and “could nowhere find the slightest traces of a volcano.”

What must the reverberating thunder have been among these precipices to the Hebrews, who had scarcely ever seen a cloud in the sky!

If the monks looked pale-faced to us, we must have presented an extraordinary spectacle to them,—with our faces,—some red, some brown, and our parched and cracked lips. As we looked round upon one another, we saw complexions of all hues between a

boiled lobster and a mahogany table. It is better so than to annoy one's self with the weight of an umbrella and the stifling of a veil. I threw aside my veil after one or two trials. Its shifting threads are painful to the eyes amidst the glare of the Desert. I was well satisfied with my goggles,—not of glass, which is heating, and might be broken,—but of black woven wire, which admits the air freely, and cannot get spoiled. As for the rest, we wore broad-brimmed hats, and, for the most part, took no further pains, trusting that time would make us look like ourselves again.

The monks have lately built a new set of guest chambers, in which the greater part of our company were lodged. These rooms are made as comfortable as possible, under the circumstances : and there we remained from Saturday afternoon till Wednesday morning. We were waited upon, of course, by our own people ; and served, for the most part, with our own utensils and stores ; while a monk was at our call, to give us guidance and information. When the time came for settling accounts, the gentlemen concerned with the Prior thought him rapacious,—as former priors have been considered by former travellers ; and this, after every regard being paid to his isolated position, and the circumstances of his establishment.—Within the convent, everything is done by the monks themselves, who are educated to their respective offices. A tribe of Arabs are the outdoor servants or serfs of the establishment,—being employed to fetch and carry, bring wood and prepare charcoal, keep the sheep and goats, and spin the wool, &c. : in return for which offices, they are fed according to their need.

On the Sunday morning, some of the gentlemen went to early mass,—at six,—and thought the ceremonial and appurtenances very superb. Our company were free to have their own service in the morning: and we made a quiet day of it, merely going out in the afternoon for a walk in the neighbouring wadees. Some of us studied the outside of the convent and its garden, and went to see the ravine by which we were to ascend the next day to Sinai Proper, or Djebel Mousa. It did not look very formidable; and we were happy to observe that we should have shade on our side of the mountain for nearly the whole time.

By the same hour the next day, I was convinced that, of the many mountains I have climbed, Sinai is the easiest of ascent. I found really no fatigue at all in it. Much of our ease was, no doubt, owing to the deep shade in which our path lay: but something also to the steps which are still available for the greater part of the way. According to tradition, and to all appearance, there was formerly one long staircase from the base of Horeb to the pinnacle of Djebel Mousa; the number of steps being variously reported as from fourteen to fifty thousand. It is the greatest possible help, in ascending a mountain, to be saved all uncertainty of footing. With this advantage, shade, water, and plenty of time, we found the expedition as easy as it was interesting.

Within half an hour we arrived at the well-known spring of ice-cold water, which lay dark in its pool within the rock, fringed with the delicate fern dropping out of every crevice.—The next striking object was the arch spanning the road which marks this as a sacred

journey. The effect is strange, of a portal erected in a ravine,—a sort of leave of access to the mountain top : and the distant views now opening are exceedingly impressive when seen through the arch. Soon after, the guide cried out “Half way,” and the least able of us felt that we should all reach the summit.—Next, we arrived at the plain at the top of Horeb ;—the plain from which spring the peaks of Moses and of St. Catherine, and some others. In the midst stands, in mournful solitude, a cypress, planted by the monks a hundred years ago : and near it, the poor little chapel of St. Elias. We had already passed the small chapel of Santa Maria. In this plain it was, according to the Kurán, that Moses communicated with God ; and we find many Arabic inscriptions here cut on the stones by Mohammedan devotees. In their belief, this is the top of Horeb, and the holiest place. They have a mosque, however, on the summit of Djebel Mousa, a few paces from the Christian church which occupies the highest pinnacle.

We were now about three quarters of an hour from the convent ; and there was another half hour’s climbing before us. The ascent here became steeper ; but it was still easy. Near the summit we saw wider and wilder views than before, through a second arch. At the top, we followed the advice of our guide in resting and refreshing ourselves in the shade of the convent, before looking about us in the glaring sun. I thought I had never seen such sunlight, as it streamed into the dark vaulted chamber, through and over the fine group of Arab boys who filled up the doorway.

What a view it was when we came out ! Burckhardt

missed it, through the provoking accident of a thick fog. As for us, we saw everything radiantly that came within the capacity of the eye at all. For a vast distance round, it was one billowy expanse of brown summits, arid beyond description, and unrelieved by any variety of colour, or by any glimpse of valley or plain. This summit is certainly not visible from any plain: and, in regard to that consideration, it is not superior in its claims to Serbal. Serbal rose finely above a nearer ridge. Some of us thought we could discern the sea on that side; but we remained uncertain about it. The other sea line, the Gulf of Akaba, was plain enough, a line of grey between two of sand. To the north, there was the relief of a white ridge above the desolate brown;—hills in the El Tiheh region. The scene was altogether strange and desolate;—most like one's notion of an antecedent age of our globe,—a time before man was created, when deep calling to deep, and thunders responding to thunders, and monsters slow moving in wildernesses, had the world all to themselves. I am thankful to have seen it; for, whether it be one of the historical holy places or not, its singular wildness renders it quite sacred enough.

We found the descent perfectly easy, and had the advantage of a cool breeze, in addition to the shade. We returned quite untired, and lost no time in making our arrangements for an ascent of Horeb, the next day.

In the morning, it appeared that only six of our fourteen would undertake the more laborious work of to-day. Of these six, I was one.—The expedition

proved so much more interesting than even that of yesterday that I was concerned for those who staid behind.

We left the convent at seven,—after breakfast,—skirting the base of Horeb till we came to one of the principal shows of the place,—the stone in which Aaron moulded the head of the golden calf. Burckhardt speaks of it as “the head of the golden calf, transmuted into stone,” and continues; * “it is somewhat singular that both the monks and the Bedoueens call it the cow’s head (Ras el Bakar), and not the calf’s, confounding it perhaps with the ‘red heifer’ of which the Old Testament and the Kurán speak. It is a stone half buried in the ground, and bears some resemblance to the forehead of a cow. Some travellers have explained this stone to be the mould in which Aaron cast the calf, though it is not hollow but projecting: the Arabs and monks however gravely assured me that it was ‘the cow’s’ head itself.”—I do not know what to make of this, unless we suppose Burckhardt’s guide to have shown him a different stone from the one pointed out to us, which was hollow;—the hollow being something of the form of a cow’s head, and being certainly represented to us as the mould in which the head of the calf was cast.—As to its being called “the cow” by the monks and Arabs, it does not much matter. The Hebrews had seen as much of the cow of Athor as of the bull Apis in Egypt; and tradition might nearly as well assign the one object as the other. The Old Testament however declares it to have been a young bull; and when Aaron presented it to the people as the god

* Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 583.

that brought them out of Egypt, he was more likely to have had the god than the goddess in his mind.

We next passed the fine garden belonging to the convent which I mentioned as being on our right when we first arrived. We did not enter it, but enjoyed in passing the sight of its blossoming fruit-trees. From this time, we saw many inscriptions on the rocks, as we passed up through the narrow wadee called El Ledja. The character is of the same unreadable kind as in Wadec Mokatteb and at Mount Serbal, and proves that scribes of the class that went there had been here also. What their object was,—whether the mountain, or, as many have supposed, merely the rock which Moses struck for water, no one can confidently say. To me it seems improbable that so many should come for the sake of Rephidim merely, in so very early an age,—it must be so clear to even the blindest devotees that this could be no place for striking the rock for water,—natural springs abounding in the whole district. I should be disposed to consider the choice of this stone for a relic of the miracle the device of a comparatively modern monkish age.—This rock was about twice the height of the tallest of our party ;—nearly twelve feet. There are marks on it as of a rush of water. To leave such marks, however, the water must have rushed for some hundreds of years ; and Burckhardt's opinion is that the chisel was the more probable instrument. Still proceeding along El Ledja, we passed three gardens and a chaos of boulders, and at last sat down in the pleasant olive grove belonging to the small convent of El-Erbayn,—“the Forty,”—so named from the forty martyrs who perished here ;—monks or anchorites

slaughtered by the Bedouens. There are no clear particulars told on the spot : but Dr. Robinson points out * that these forty martyrs were probably the thirty-eight killed, and two mortally wounded, of the hermits who were attacked by the Saracens in the fourth century, when the holy Superior Doulas retired, with a few companions, into a tower on the mountain. The story is that when the Saracens endeavoured to attack the tower, the whole of the summit of the mountain became fiery ; on seeing which, the enemy fled, leaving the monks free to come down and bury their dead.

We were invited into this convent by our servants ; and we entered it through a little orchard of blossoming trees. Mats were spread for us in the gallery ; and there we were served with coffee, palm brandy, and dates preserved in oil,—which some of the party found highly offensive, and others rather liked. This convent and garden are in the charge of the Arab dependents of the Christians ; and a few of the monks occasionally live here.—About ten o'clock, we began to climb the mountain. As we were on the opposite side from that which we ascended yesterday, we were, of course, in the sunshine ; and blazing and broiling sunshine it was, till we reached the highest ravine. Here was no path, nor any steps like those which had so aided us on the other side of the mountain. It was rough and toilsome climbing till we reached the little plain on which grows the solitary cypress. Then, after descending a little, we ascended a ravine which few travellers have, I believe, attempted, and where women had probably never before

* Biblical Researches, &c., i. 182.

set foot. Dr. Robinson speaks strongly* of the difficulty and danger of the latter part of the ascent, which appears to have been more formidable to him than to us. When we reached our point, we thought no more of our fatigues, nor of our doubts how to get down again. There, besides all, or nearly all, that we saw yesterday, we beheld, stretched below us, the wide plain and its tributary wadees,—a space amply sufficient for the encampment of the Hebrews, be their numbers what they might. “The whole plain,” says Dr. Robinson,† “lay spread out beneath our feet, with the adjacent wadees and mountains; while Wadee esh-Sheikh on the right, and the recess on the left, both connected with, and opening broadly from, er-Râhah (the plain) presented an area which serves nearly to double that of the plain. Our conviction was strengthened, that here, or on some one of the adjacent cliffs, was the spot where the Lord ‘descended in fire’ and proclaimed the Law. Here lay the plain where the whole congregation might be assembled; here was the mount that could be approached and touched, if not forbidden; and here the mountain brow, where alone the lightnings and the thick cloud would be visible, and the thunders and the voice of the trump be heard, when the Lord ‘came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.’”

We chose for our resting-place the shadow of a rock where we sat long, looking abroad upon a scene which fulfilled all our expectations and desires. The spreading plain and its tributaries made the view a far finer one than that from Djebel Mousa. Again Serbal stood out grandly, towering above all the other mountains; and

* Biblical Researches, &c., I. 157.

† Ibid. I. 158.

again the eastern Arabian hills were exquisitely beautiful. Immediately below us was a fearful precipice which it was scarcely possible to look down steadily. It was only by being unable to discover the sea that we were aware of being at a lower point than yesterday. One alone of our party ventured up the small remaining distance; and he went without shoes, and supported by two Arabs.

After relating his process of measurement of the plain at the foot of Sinai, Dr. Robinson says:—"We may therefore fairly estimate the whole plain at two geological miles long, and ranging in breadth from one-third to two-thirds of a mile; or as equivalent to a surface of at least one square mile. This space is nearly doubled by the recess so often mentioned on the west, and by the broad and level area of Wadee Sheikh on the east, which issues at right angles to the plain, and is equally in view of the front and summit of the present Horeb.—The examination of this afternoon convinced us that here was space enough to satisfy all the requisitions of the Scriptural narrative, so far as it relates to the assembling of the congregation to receive the Law. Here, too, one can see the fitness of the injunction, to set bounds around the mount, that neither man nor beast might approach too near. The encampment before the Mount, as has been before suggested, might not improbably include only the headquarters of Moses and the elders, and of a portion of the people; while the remainder, with their flocks, were scattered among the adjacent valleys."—To us it appeared probable that here, at least, was the place

which the writer or writers of the Book of Exodus had in mind, as the scene of the giving of the Law: and no one on the spot can avoid the conviction that the writer was intimately acquainted with the localities of the Peninsula of Sinai.

The descent from our pinnacle was less difficult than we had expected,—probably from our being exhilarated by what we had seen. In the little plain of the cypress, coffee was brought to us by our dragomen, who were better aware than ourselves of what still lay before us. The guides now led us down by a ravine which descended directly upon the wadee in which the convent stands. This long pass was one continuous series of shattered rocks, so fatiguing to traverse that the strongest of us took shorter and more timorous steps, and more frequent rests, till the trembling of our limbs made us glad to be at last within sight of home. The heat among the rock-shelves of the wadee was excessive: and now having accomplished all our objects in this singular and interesting region, we were not sorry to see encamped behind the convent some of the camels and drivers with whom we were to proceed to-morrow towards the head of the Gulf of Akaba.

CHAPTER V.

MOSES AT MOUNT SINAI.

THE great interest of the Sinai region lies in its unaltered and unalterable character. There it is, feature by feature the same as when those events occurred which make it holy ground. In every other kind of scenery, there is more or less change, from one thousand years to another. The country is differently cleared, or cultivated, or peopled: even the everlasting Nile changes its course. But here, where there is neither clearing, nor cultivation, nor settled people, where it seems as if volcanic action only could make new features in the scene, and where volcanic action does not seem probable, there is no impediment to one's seeing Sinai as it was when Moses there halted his people. And I did so see Sinai, during the memorable Sunday we spent there. Turning my back on the convent, and forgetting the wretched superstitions of the monks, I looked abroad that day with the eyes of a disciple of Moses, who had followed his footsteps from Memphis hither; and I saw more than by many years' reading of the Pentateuch at home. How differently the Pentateuch here reads, from the same worn old bible which one has handled for five-and-twenty years, I could not have imagined. The light from Egypt and

Arabia shining into it illuminates unthought-of places, and gives a new and most fresh colouring to the whole. I little thought ever to have seen so much of Moses as I did this day, within sight of Arab tents, like those in which he and Zipporah and their children lived when first here with Jethro's flocks; within sight of the same peaks which were landmarks to the wandering tribes; and of the same wadees where they rested, and surrounded by the very same mountain springs whence they brought water for themselves and their flocks. The wells within the convent seem to have been always inexhaustible: yet I dare say some of the Hebrew women and children discovered the ice-cold spring behind, which has no doubt lain in its shadowy nook since Horeb was upreared. I wonder whether it was fringed with ferns when the Hebrew women saw it, as it is now. It was a tempting place for gossip,—for sitting down in the shade to talk over the comforts of Goshen, and the verdure of Egypt, and pointing out the dreariness of this place, and reminding one another how unwilling they and their husbands had been to leave Egypt, foreseeing that they should only get into trouble by trying a new country.* In yonder plain was the crowd of dark, low tents, with no tabernacle yet in the midst. Among the neighbouring wadees were the herdsmen dispersed, tending their flocks every day of the week; for as yet there was no Sabbath. This, and very much more did I see on that Sunday at Sinai: much that I could not have seen if I had been a contemporary disciple of Moses;—much that can be

* Exodus XIV. 12.—“Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians!”

seen only by the light of an after age, of the educational purposes and processes for which the Hebrews were brought here.

Here, in some nook which had been his haunt while watching his flocks, sat Moses in those days, overlooking the flock which he was now to lead as the Shepherd of Men. How intense must have been his sense of solitude here ! No longer learning, in congenial companionship, "all the wisdom of the Egyptians," but alone,—he the only wise and the only earnest man among a multitude who had no wisdom and no virtue ;—he, a man of fine organisation, of gentle rearing, of timid nature, "looking before and after," and overwhelmed with what he saw,—how could he sustain himself under his charge ? Without irreverence, we may attribute to him the sustaining thought which was uttered by one long after him ; "the world hath not known thee ; but I have known thee." Retired into the mountain to pray, he saw beneath him,—not the gleaming lake, on whose shores were those whom he was to make "fishers of men ;" not fields "white unto the harvest," but only parched wilds thronged with people from whom he could choose none to help him and carry out his work. That land of the lake and ripening fields lay, not beneath him, but far away in the future,—seen only in faith, and never to be entered by him : his supports must therefore be from faith and benevolence ;—from his trust in God and his love to his brethren : and we may hope and believe that amidst his anxieties and tremblings, his doubts of himself and his shame for the people under his charge, these were enough. We may trust that he had his hours of

comfort and high hope in his mountain retirements. It is impossible to avoid endeavouring to enter into his mind, when on the spot of his meditations. We cannot help "looking before and after," from his point of view, by the light which he himself has given us,—the glory which shines from his face even upon our time, brightened as it is by that greater light which afterwards arose "to enlighten the gentiles, and glorify the people Israel."

By his priestly rank and privileges, Moses knew the Mysteries of Egyptian worship. He was the only one of the multitude at Sinai who knew, what we all know, or may know, now,—that the two chief objects of all the heathen Mysteries were the preservation of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and the detection or explanation of Idolatry. The Orphic Hymn,* sung by the initiated in Mysteries which were derived from Egypt, was familiar truth to him:—"I will declare a secret to the initiated; but let the doors be shut against the profane. . . . I shall utter the truth without disguise. Suffer not therefore thy former prejudices to debar thee from that happy life which the knowledge of these sublime truths will procure unto thee: but carefully contemplate this divine oracle, and preserve it in purity of mind and heart. Go on, in the right way, and contemplate the Sole Governor of the world. He is One, and of Himself Alone: and to that One all things owe their being. He operates through all, was never seen by mortal eyes, but does Himself see every one." Moses knew that this sublime truth

* Quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius.—See "Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses," I. 232.

of the Mysteries was once the common faith of men, though it was now called Atheism, from the contempt it was supposed to cast upon the popular gods; and that it must again become the faith of mankind, through him, amidst all the difficulty and suffering which attend a return from error to a fundamental primitive idea. He knew that before he could see his hope fulfilled,—his hope that every Hebrew would worship Jehovah as his father Abraham had done,—the people must go through a process of training as painful to himself as irksome to them. But this was the work he had to do; and he had brought them hither to begin it.

“With regard to the other part of the SECRET” (of the Mysteries) says Bishop Warburton,* “the *doctrine of the UNITY*, Clemens Alexandrinus informs us that the Egyptian mystagogues taught it amongst their *greater secrets*. ‘The Egyptians’ says he, ‘did not use to reveal their mysteries indiscriminately to all, nor expose their truths concerning their gods to the profane, but to those only who were to succeed to the administration of the State: and to such of the priests as were most approved by their education, learning, and quality.’”

It was the glory of Moses that he saw how such a truth concerned all the children of men: how this was a matter in which those were the truly profane who monopolised the truth, and dishonoured God by hiding him from the minds and hearts of mankind at large; and not those outside who could not pay homage to a God of whom they had never heard. His

* Divine Legation of Moses, I. 223.

was the enterprise of laying open the Mysteries to all, and of making of the Hebrews a high-caste nation. It could not be done any where but in the Desert. The isolation of the Desert was required quite as much for the safety of the announcement as for the training of the people in their purified faith. In Egypt, or any other heathen country, the doctrine of Moses would have excited horror, as the Atheism* of those days; and he would himself have been torn to pieces as that greatest of criminals, a revealer of the Mysteries. He came into the desert to do the daring Deed: and how the results were estimated in the future days of his nation, Josephus shows us in a passage of his Reply to Apion which is singularly interesting to us here. This citizen of a high-caste nation tells Apion that the highest and sublimest knowledge held by a few of the gentiles, and enjoyed only on the rare occasions of their Mysteries, was the daily privilege of the whole Hebrew people. He says† “Can any government be more holy than this? or any religion better adapted to the nature of the Deity? Where, in any place but this, are the whole people, by the special diligence of the priests, to whom the care of public instruction is committed, accurately taught the principles of true piety? So that the body politic seems, as it were, one great *assembly*, constantly kept together, for the celebration of some sacred *mysteries*. For those things

* It is instructive to see what the “Atheism” of Epicurus was, in that saying of his which Lord Bacon declares (Essay 16, “of Atheism”) that it is worthy of Plato: “Non deos vulgi negare profanum; sed vulgi opiniones diis applicare profanum.”

† Cont. Ap. lib. II. cap. 22. Quoted by Warburton, Divine Leg. I, 225.

which the gentiles keep up for a few days only, that is, during those solemnities they call MYSTERIES and INITIATIONS, we, with vast delight, and a plenitude of knowledge which admits of no error, fully enjoy, and perpetually contemplate through the whole course of our lives. If you ask the nature of those things which in our sacred rites are enjoined and forbidden, I answer, they are simple, and easily understood. The first instruction relates to the DEITY, and teaches that GOD CONTAINS ALL THINGS, and is a Being every way perfect and happy; that he is self-existent, and the SOLE CAUSE of all existence; the Beginning, Middle, and End of all things," &c.

The Supreme, as made known in the heathen Mysteries, exercised no immediate government over men; and in order to give them any idea of a divine government, national and subordinate gods were presented to them, who must, of course, be named. Much superstition in Egypt was connected with the names of the gods; and the Hebrews could not, as the history shows us, recognise a protecting god, who was declared to them as a patriarchal, and was henceforth to be a national God, but through a Name. The first request recorded to be made by Moses was to be commissioned to declare a Name to the people: an incident which shows how completely they had lost the knowledge of One God, and how thoroughly polytheistic were their religious ideas.* And these were the people whom he

* As Lord Bacon observes, "The Indians of the west have names for their particular gods, though they have no name for God: as if the heathens should have had the names Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, &c., but not the word *Deus*; which shows, that even those barbarous people have the notion, though they have not the latitude and extent of it."—*Essay 16th. Of Atheism.*

had to bring into a clear moral relation with one divine Ruler, under such definite sanctions as should keep their minds from going astray among various objects of worship! No wonder it was long,—many generations,—before they conceived of Jehovah as more than a National God. He was the God of their fathers, and their own: better and stronger than the gods of other nations,—and even their over-ruler: but still, the God of none but the Hebrews:—the benefactor of the children of Abraham, but the enemy of the Egyptians and the Canaanites.

In this last belief, it is clear that they were not contradicted or discouraged. In establishing a clear moral relation between them and One Divine Ruler, it was necessary to keep them out of the way of danger from the two most populous and civilised countries in the world,—Egypt and Canaan. Here they were withdrawn into the Desert which lay between the abstract polytheism of the Egyptians and the elementary worship of the Canaanites: but their minds were full of the remembrance of the one; and they must soon (as Moses then supposed) come into the sight of the other. Besides attaching them to their God, it was evidently thought needful by him that they should consider their God to be the enemy of their enemies, in the land they had left and that to which they were going. And thus was Jehovah the God of the Hebrews alone for so long a time that it is difficult to learn from the history when the Jewish nation even began to be prepared for the nobler theological views presented by Christ. Low, in the comparison, as the ancient conception appears, we need only place ourselves back in the time of the

Exodus to see how new and how mighty was the idea of the Supreme being a tutelary god. As we all know, it was too new and too mighty for the Hebrew mind of the time.

As for the form which the relation between Jehovah and his people was to take, that was in entire agreement with the training of the mind of Moses, and the conceptions and needs of the people. The only form in which a divine government could be recognised in those days, in Egypt or elsewhere, was that of a theocracy. The individual called King, in Egypt and elsewhere, was a priest ; a vicegerent of the local god. But while these kings ruled in the name of the gods, and had the advantage of their authority, they appropriated to themselves the honours and privileges of royalty, and eclipsed to the people any sacred light which might have visited them from a direct relation with any thing divine. The noble, venerable, inestimable distinction between the Mosaic plan and that of any other theocracy was that here no such intervention was permitted. There was no man here to whom they were to bow the knee, and who was to tower between them and the light of their life. Instead of a crowned priest, in royal chariot, riding over the people's necks to attend Mysteries in which he was to enjoy what they would never know, here was the meek magnanimous Moses standing barefoot and plainly clad, pointing the gaze of the people to the mountain top or to the sky, undergoing instead of enjoying power, and having nothing to ask of Jehovah or of his brethren but that He should be their God, and they should be His people. According to all that Moses had ever seen, learned, or thought,

he must unite in himself the offices of legislator and interpreter of the Divine Will. The lawgiver and priest were one in every country he had known or heard of: and he must be so now. But never before was there a Vicegerent of an Unseen Power so meek; and never a lawgiver so disinterested. We never think of him as the Pharaoh he might so easily have been;—more easily than he could be what he was. We think of him as one of the quietest men whose names have come down to our day; a man struggling under a burden of duty and destiny which he found too heavy for him, and from which he would fain have shrunk, to hide himself again in the moist nooks of the Desert, with his sheep about him, and ruminate once more over “all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” Yet, as he did not quit his work, and as he did achieve an enterprise which will affect the destinies of mankind to the end of time, we may be assured that he had the support of that privileged thought,—“the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.”

It appears as if there had been an intention and a hope of training the Hebrews to a state of knowledge and obedience by moral instruction, and a plan of pure and simple worship;—the obedience of Abraham, and the simplicity of his worship in the door of his tent being perhaps the example and the aspiration which Moses had before him when he brought forth the Hebrews from Egypt. Warburton and others are of opinion that the ritual scheme was adopted after the affair of the golden calf, which showed the people to be more incapable of a pure religion and direct communion than could have been supposed. A comparison of

the two sets of Commandments seems to countenance this view. The first set,* though falling below the inculcation of personal righteousness, yet are of a much higher character than the second. They aim at a good degree of social order, for the age in which they were given, and contain nothing ritual except the precept about the Sabbath. This is the set brought down by Moses when he found the people feasting about the golden calf, and which he broke and threw from him. The second Ten,† which remained permanent, are such as may well be believed to have accompanied the ritual system now supposed to have been instituted. They are all ritual except the first two: these two merely forbidding all covenanting with heathens, and making of molten gods. The whole set contains no directions for personal or social conduct. The fact certainly conveys the impression that a more advanced system of Moral Government was withdrawn for the time, and replaced by one less advanced, in proportion to the disappointment caused by the lapse of the degraded people. The Jewish writers, for the most part, lay the blame of this lapse on the influence of the Egyptian mob, "the mixed multitude" who followed in the train of the Hebrews:‡ but it does not save their credit at all to suppose them more easily influenced by such comrades than by Moses and the ideas he had communicated. However this may be, a ritual religion they were now to have: and in this ritual, they must have their Moral Government. Moses had been compelled to surrender his loftiest

* Exodus, XX. 3—18.

† Exodus, XXXIV. 12—27.

‡ Kitto's History of Palestine, p. 200 (note).

aim and hope,—that of raising the people above a ceremonial worship. His object henceforth plainly was to elevate the ceremonial worship into as good a moral government as its nature would permit.

In the great concern of all,—that of the Sanctions of the Moral Law which he gave, Moses made his third marked departure from the religion of Egypt. The first was his laying open the Mysteries: the second, his declaring the Supreme a tutelary god: and the third was his offering, as the Sanction of the Moral Law, Temporal Retribution instead of Future Reward and Punishment.

Under every religious system, the excruciating difficulty has been the Existence of Evil. Individuals may reconcile themselves to the fact; and so many have succeeded in doing so, that the history of philosophy is full of the apologies of sages for the existence of Evil. But, as a philosophical question, the difficulty has never been touched; and philosophy has not yet discovered how it ever can be. The learning of Moses taught him exactly what the deepest learning teaches the wisest men now,—the mischievous operation of this difficulty upon all religious systems that the world had known. He was aware that the most pernicious of all the discrepancies between the Mysteries and the popular knowledge lay in the respective views of the Initiated and the people about a future life. While the priests, unable to account for the inequalities of Providence in this life, taught that reward and punishment would restore the balance in the next, all philosophers whatever, (Cicero tells us) held in common that God could not be angry; and that he could not hurt any one:

that anger and favour are equally impossible to a happy and immortal Nature; and that therefore Fear can have no place in the mind of man in regard to God.—What a state of things was here! As Plutarch says, You may examine the globe; and in no region where Man has lived will you find “a city without the knowledge of a god, or the practice of religion: without the use of vows, oaths, oracles, and sacrifices to procure good, or of deprecatory rites to avert evil:” and elsewhere again, he declares it to be so ancient an opinion that good men should be recompensed after death, that he could not reach either to the author or origin of it. Such was the escape for the multitude from the difficulty of the unequal distribution of pain and pleasure among men: and while the multitude received this on their authority, the Initiated were agreed that God was so free from affections and passions of every kind that he neither conferred good nor inflicted evil on individuals, at any time.—Warburton tells us, in the following passage, of a late result of this discrepancy which shows us how the case must have appeared to one so learned and sagacious as Moses.

“Lactantius, from a forensic lawyer, now become an advocate for Christianity, found nothing so much hindered its reception with the learned as the doctrine of a Future Judgment; which their universal principle, *that God could not be angry*, directly opposed. To strike at the root of this evil, he composed a discourse which Jerome calls *pulcherrimum opus*, entitled *DE IRÂ DEI*: for he had observed, he tells us, that this principle was now much spread among the common people: he lays the blame of it upon the philosophers; and tells

us, as Tully had done before, that all the philosophers agreed to exclude the passion of anger from the God-head."*—The ground taken by Lactantius was that if God could not be angry, all religion was done away with, as a future state of retribution was thus excluded : he therefore contended that the God of the Christians was actuated, as man is, by love and hatred ; only that they are always reasonable in Him : and he then proceeded to argue for God having a human form, as a necessary consequence of his sharing human passions. Into this we need not go. The important part of this citation is the testimony that the doctrine of a future Judgment was the obstacle to the reception of Christianity by the learned ; and why.

Moses saw thus that the doctrine of future reward and punishment was disbelieved by the learned, and was so far made a deception to the people as that the inevitable suffering which arises from sin, and the peace which attends goodness, were concealed from them under the disguise of arbitrary punishment and reward. The Initiated appear to have believed in a future life, and in the natural retribution by which, from their very constitution, the virtuous enjoy and the vicious suffer : but, in as far as they declared these things in the form of divine promises and threats, contingent on future conduct, they deceived the people : and Moses as carefully avoided perpetrating this evil as any other connected with the Mysteries.

The second ordinary way of meeting the difficulty of the existence of evil was no less familiar to him, from his position through life ;—the supposition of two opposing

* Divine Legation, &c. I. 497.

deities. He had seen in Egypt how from being brothers, children of one father, Osiris and Typho, Good and Evil, had become foes; and he had witnessed the moral mischief which arises from the belief of a malevolent spiritual being. We find therefore in the Mosaic system no more trace of an evil spiritual being, hostile to God and man, than of a future life of reward and punishment. The serpent in Eden is, in the history, a mere serpent, altogether Egyptian in its conception, and bearing no relation whatever to the Evil Being with which superstition afterwards connected it. Moses nowhere hints at such a notion as that of an express Author of Evil. On the contrary his doctrine, consistent from end to end of his teachings, is that which Isaiah expressed afterwards in the plain words :* “I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.”

As for the remaining method of attempting to account for the existence of Evil,—the allowing a separate and opposing operation to the high qualities of the Supreme,—Moses had seen enough of the consequences of deifying the divine attributes to avoid all the unphilosophical methods in use elsewhere of setting up a rivalry between Holiness and Compassion, between Justice and Mercy. He avoided this practice as the immediate origin of polytheism. The God of the Hebrews, as declared by him, was presented under the simple aspect of a Being in whom all power and all will were concentrated; the sole Ruler, who chose and governed this people by his simple and all-venerable Will.

* Isaiah, XLV. 6, 7.

As for what Moses believed about the destiny of man after death, that is a question apart from what he taught to the people,—apart from that of the Sanctions of the Law which he offered. He probably held the doctrine of his caste in Egypt,—that the soul or life was an emanation from the Supreme, to be absorbed after death, and lose its separate existence. From the few and indistinct traces which remain in the Hebrew scriptures of a traditional belief of some kind of futurity for man, it is probable that he thus held this doctrine of the Mysteries. But that he saw this doctrine to be as unpractical as every one sees it to be, is clear from the whole tenour of his life, conduct and doctrine. His sublime object of laying open the Mysteries to his whole people, his noble earnestness and unquestionable simplicity and sincerity prove, as strongly as act can prove thought, that he held no practical religious belief that he did not impart.

The Sanction that he did present, we all know:—Temporal Reward and Punishment. A more plain and practical doctrine was never presented to the mind of man than this of Moses;—that every act of obedience to the Will of Jehovah should be rewarded by happiness in this life, and every act of disobedience punished by unhappiness. The happiness and unhappiness were to be substantial, generally immediate, and visible to the eyes of all men.—Generally immediate; but not always. Jehovah was long-suffering, and might delay retribution: but the evil would be suffered by the children, down to distant generations, if the sinner himself appeared to escape it. Not only was this procrastination of punishment indicated by the fact of an

unequal providence from day to day ; but it afforded a hold upon a class of sinners who could not be otherwise wrought upon ;—the fearless and hardy, who would brave consequences for themselves, but whose parental affections would bear an appeal ; or, at worst, their family pride ;—a strong passion among the Hebrews. In this declaration of procrastination of punishment, we see also the first opening of that doctrine which has since become so prominent in the religious life of man,—the doctrine of Repentance. Of this great doctrine, which has perhaps more than any other influenced the spiritual life of mankind, the religion of Moses appears to have opened the first suggestion.

As his doctrine necessarily supposes an equal Providence in this life, the question unavoidably arises whether Moses believed it in its simplicity ; and if so, how he could believe it in the face of the facts which daily met his eyes. This great point of contrariety between the Mosaic and the Christian systems is usually considered the most perplexing that occurs. It was beautifully said by both Lord Bacon and Pascal (by which first I cannot discover,—they being contemporaries) that “ Prosperity was the promise of the Old Testament : Adversity of the New.” This is most true and beautiful : a saying worthy of meditative Christians. It impels us to consider whether Moses could have simply and undeviatingly believed that every Hebrew was happy or unhappy according to his deserts. Here, in this Desert, did he see no person sick whom he could not believe to be guilty ? Did he not see infants languishing with thirst ? Did he not see bold and

irreligious men appropriating comforts to themselves, to the injury of the gentle and obedient? How this doctrine subsequently acted on the minds of the Hebrews, in the interpretation of the ways of God to man, we see everywhere, from the Books of Chronicles which, in recording any misfortune happening to any body, always suppose or invent (as we see by a comparison with the parallel passages in Kings) a prior sin as the cause, up to the case of him concerning whom the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The question is whether Moses, offering a sanction which required and supposed an equal Providence, simply held that the fact was so, without any doctrine of compensation whatever. Judging by the evidences we have everywhere else of his earnestness and openness, I cannot but believe that he did. And this, not by such considerations as Christians have the benefit of; considerations of the interior peace which attends well-doing, and of the insignificance of the outward fortunes in comparison with the welfare of the mind, so that the whole world is no equivalent for the soul; but in a simple faith that Jehovah would and did deal with his people,—with every man, woman and child of them,—according to their deserts, manifesting his retribution in their outward fortunes. In this view, it does not matter whether the obedience required was ritual or spiritual obedience. When there was no water, the multitude thirsted alike,—those who were too young to sin under the law, as well as the mature; and before the time when children could suffer for their parents' sin, as well as after.—Whatever was the inner convic-

tion of Moses, such was the Sanction offered by him; in avoidance at once of the popular heathen doctrine of future reward and punishment, and of the polytheistic belief of an Evil Spirit contravening the goodness of God.

The reward and punishment being individually experienced, as all enjoyment and suffering must be, had the law the individual for its object, or the public good? About this there can be no question. The relation here was of King and people, leaving for Christianity the nobler and dearer relation of Father and Child. Virtue here was, not rectitude, but obedience. Sin was, not corrupt thought, but failure of allegiance to the Divine King. The Commandments, therefore,—even the first ten, which are moral and not merely ritual like the second, relate only to political or social virtue, leaving it to Christianity to work out the nobler object of personal holiness. Such degree of self-government as is necessary for social virtue is of course supposed and required; but merely such as is indispensable for the good of society and the honour of its Divine Ruler, and not that thorough interior purification and discipline which Christianity offers to every man with no political view, but for his own sake. Our own Hooker seems to have described the scope of the first and higher set of Commandments, when he says,* “A politic use of religion there is. Men fearing God are thereby a good deal more effectually than by positive laws restrained from doing evil; inasmuch as these laws have no further power than over our outward actions only; whereas unto men’s inward cogitations,

* Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. sec. 2.

unto the privy intents and motions of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle. What more savage, wild and cruel than Man, if he see himself able, either by fraud to overreach, or by power to overbear, the laws whereunto he should be subject? Wherefore in so great boldness to offend, it behoveth that the world should be held in awe, not by a vain surmise, but a true apprehension of somewhat, which no man may think himself able to withstand. This is the Politic Use of Religion."

Even this politic use was found to be of too high a character for the Hebrews as yet. When Moses came down from the Mount with the tables of the Moral Law in his hands,—came down perhaps by some one of the rocky chasms which I was exploring this Sunday at Sinai,—and looked towards the plain which I gazed on this day, he saw, not a people awaiting in awe the pleasure of their Divine King, but a crowd rejoicing in having possessed themselves of a god who would protect them back to Egypt;—back to the sweet Nile waters, and the merry feasts of idols. Instead of the cheerful response he looked for, as before, "and all the people answered together, and said 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do,'" he heard the sound of shouts and singing as the people danced about their golden Apis. Then Moses not only destroyed the idol, but the tables of the Law;—"brake them beneath the Mount;" and after a long and terrible conflict, surrendered his highest hopes for the people, and pursued a lower aim.—He gave them a ritual, Egyptian in its forms and seasons and associations, but with Jehovah alone for its object. The multitude were in fact incapable of receiving a

faith without forms, as children are incapable of receiving abstract ideas but by means of illustrations: and they would have gone back to Egypt on the first disappointment or pretence, if Moses had not brought as much of Egypt as he could into the Desert to them.—He had all the requisite knowledge of Egyptian worship and ways. He had at his command, among the “mixed multitude,” Egyptian artificers; besides that many of the Hebrews themselves were no doubt skilled artisans. So he treated them as they compelled him to do. He offered them a new set of Commandments, eight out of ten of which were about feasts and offerings, and sacrifices and holy days. He fixed upon the days of Egyptian feasts, knowing that the people would at all events observe the days of New Moon, First-fruits, &c., and securing this observance for Jehovah by special ordinance. He set them to work upon a tabernacle,—a moveable temple for the Desert, as nearly as possible resembling an Egyptian temple. He made them an ark,—exactly like what the traveller in Egypt sees sculptured in the processions of the priests, on the walls of palaces and temples finished before Abraham was born.—He permitted to them an oracle, the Urim and Thummim, derived immediately from an Egyptian model. And, most mournful to him of all, he had to give them a priesthood, like that which they had been accustomed to look up to as sacred. He had hoped to make of them a high-caste nation, and had delivered to them the announcement “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.”* But they could not yet take that rank: they were not adequate to that privilege;

* Exodus, XIX. 6.

they preferred deputing their honours to a class, and withdrawing themselves behind this class from communion with Jehovah, and from the light of his countenance.—It had become impossible for them to take up the patriarchal faith where their fathers had lost it : and the Egyptian element which could not yet be dislodged, required large accommodation. It is very interesting to read the account which their own pious descendant, Maimonides, gives* of this crisis in the life of his race.

“ As at that time the universal practice, and the mode of worship in which all were educated was, that various kinds of animals should be offered in the temples in which their idols were placed, and before whom their worshippers were to prostrate themselves and to burn incense ; and as there were also certain persons set apart for the service of these temples, therefore the Divine wisdom and Providence of God, which so eminently shines forth in all his creatures, did not ordain the abandonment or abolition of all such worship. For it is the well-known disposition of the human heart to cleave to that to which it has been habituated ; even in things to which it is not naturally inclined. To have decreed the entire abolition of all such worship would, therefore, have been the same as if a prophet should come and say, ‘ It is the command of God, that in the day of trouble ye shall not pray, nor fast, nor publicly seek him ; but your worship shall be purely mental, and shall consist in meditation, not in action.’ On these accounts the Creator retained those modes of worship, but transferred the veneration from created

* Cited by Kitto in *History of Palestine*, p. 226.

things and shadows to his own NAME, and commanded us to direct our religious services to himself." The learned disciple of Moses then goes on to give instances. To the traveller in Egypt, the most cursory glance at the Jewish law will show the identity of the religious customs and manners of the two peoples; and the deepest research will only confirm his conviction that the forms of their religious life were substantially the same; the object being changed, and some needful reforms introduced.

When Moses had failed to satisfy the people that Jehovah should have no meaner temple than that of the heavens and the earth, and when it therefore became necessary to prepare for him a visible abiding place, there could be no doubt about what kind of temple it must be. The Hebrews were living, like the Egyptians, under a theocracy; and the temples of Egypt, palaces for the Divine King, must be the model. "The Israelites," says Dr. Kitto,* "were taught to feel that the tabernacle was not only the temple of JEHOVAH, but the palace of their KING; that the table supplied with wine and shew-bread was the royal table; that the altar was the place where the provisions of the monarch were prepared; that the priests were the royal servants, and were bound to attend not only to sacred but also to secular affairs, and were to receive, as their reward, the first tithes, which the people, as subjects, were led to consider as part of the revenue which was due to God, their immediate sovereign. Other things, of a less prominent and important nature, had reference to the same great end."

* History of Palestine, p. 227.

This is not the place for going into any elaborate comparison of the Hebrew and Egyptian religious ritual,—interesting as the subject is to those who have followed the traces of the Israelites from the Nile to Sinai. Besides that the subject may be found fully treated in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians, it belongs less to the locality of Sinai than to that of Palestine, as there is no saying how little or how much of the ritual was ordained at first, and what grew up afterwards. As the learned have now made it clear that the Books of the Law were certainly not all written in their present form, for some centuries afterwards, we cannot tell how deep was the first descent into a ceremonial religion at Sinai, and how much was the work of a strengthening priesthood in after years. Some few particulars, however, stand out clear, as original, and relating to the times of the abode at Sinai.—Among these is the setting up of the Tabernacle.

There is no reason to suppose that the Tabernacle was the first portable sanctuary ever made. The eastern idolaters of the old world used to carry about with them the shrines of their idols in their wanderings : and the prophet Amos* and the apostle Stephen† charge the Israelites with having done even this. Travellers tell us that at this day the eastern Tartars carry about a Tabernacle, which they set up for purposes of worship, and take to pieces again when they migrate. This is probably as old as any other nomade custom. Except in its portableness, the tabernacle of the Hebrews was as like as it could be made to an Egyptian temple. It had its circuit wall, represented by a

* Amos, V. 26.

† Acts, VII. 43.

curtained enclosure: it had its open court; and then the edifice itself, in the form of an oblong square. It had the two chambers which are the indispensable parts of all Egyptian temples,—the Holy Place; and within this, and very small, the Holy of Holies. The coverings which formed the ceiling and walls of these chambers were embroidered with figures of cherubim, as the ceilings and walls of Egyptian temples had sculptures and paintings of heavenly creatures. If we may take the description in the 1st chapter of Ezekiel as the Hebrew idea of cherubim, nothing can be more like the lion-headed, hawk-headed, ox-headed, winged images in the Egyptian sculptures. As in Egypt, the wood-work of the sanctuary was of the acacia (shittim wood) which grows abundantly in the wadies about Sinai, as about the shores of the Nile; and the overlaying of this wood with gold was an old Pharaonic practice. It is probable that much of the preparation was done by the hands of Egyptian artisans who migrated with the Hebrews.

In the oldest Egyptian temples, before Abraham was born, the purposes and rites of the inner temple chambers were the same as in the Tabernacle at Sinai, and in the Jerusalem Temple, up to the day when its priests fled before the soldiers of Titus. Throughout all these ages, the Holy of Holies was in the highest sense a sanctuary. No one entered it but the most privileged of the priests, and it contained nothing but the symbol of the presence of the god. In the Egyptian temples, this symbol was the shrine; a chest or closet, containing a sacred pledge, and surmounted by an idol form on its lid or top; that idol form being often guarded by winged creatures, two of the wings

stretching upwards, and two covering their bodies,—as Ezekiel describes. The guardian hawk and ibis, and the wings of Isis Protectrix precisely resemble this description; and indeed the ark of the Hebrews is exactly the Egyptian shrine, with the omission of the idol figure in the Mercy-seat. When carried by poles on the shoulders of priests, habited much like those of Egypt, trumpeters leading and following the procession, with their rams' horns at their mouths, as on occasion of the summons of Jericho, nothing can be imagined more like the sculpture on the walls at Medeenet Haboo, where the shrine, priests and trumpeters make a part of the coronation procession.

The Sacrifices offer more points of resemblance than perhaps any other part of the institutions of Moses. The oblations or gifts were the same, and the libations. The Hebrews brought cakes, meal, wafers and wine, turtle-doves and young pigeons, exactly as we see that Egyptians brought them in days when no Hebrew had yet entered the Nile Valley. Swine were abhorred by the Egyptians as the tenements of evil spirits, from the earliest days.—The practice of the sacrificer laying his hands on the head of the victim, and confessing his sins, thus charging the head with imprecations, is precisely what Herodotus relates* as the Egyptian practice; and so is the immolation of the red heifer. If the Egyptian animal was not entirely red, if a single black or white hair was found upon it, it was rejected, because Apis was black, and Typho red.† The Hebrew^h sacrifice was to be “a red heifer, without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke.”‡

* Herod. II. 39.

† Larcher's note on Herod. II. 39.

‡ Numbers, XIX. 2.

"In the Thebaid," says Sir G. Wilkinson, "the sheep was considered not merely as an emblem, but as the most sacred of all animals."—"Strabo, Clemens, and many other writers, notice the sacred character of the sheep; and the two former state that it was looked upon with the same veneration in the Saïte nome as in the neighbourhood of Thebes."* And such resemblances are found throughout the whole institution. The great point of difference is the precautionary arrangement of Moses that the Hebrews should have but one temple, and one great altar of sacrifice: an ordinance which was afterwards broken through, with consequences fatal to the singleness of Hebrew worship.

One particular of the Mosaic practices stands out above most others in curiosity and importance. Magical arts and divination were forbidden to the Hebrews, for a reason which is obvious enough. These were connected,—perhaps scientifically and truly, certainly in the popular mind,—with astrology; and the permission of them would have led directly to the planetary worship which was, above every thing, to be dreaded in the approach of the Hebrews to Canaan, where that worship prevailed. But one exception was permitted. The High-priest, and he alone, was to have recourse to an Oracle, and to be the interpreter of it. He was to ascertain the Divine pleasure by consulting his breast-plate;—the Oracle of the Urim and Thummim. As we all know, this was the Sacred Oracle of the Hebrews for many centuries. The Scriptures cite it up to the time of David. The words Urim and Thummim mean "Light and Truth," or

* *Ancient Egyptians*, V. 191, 192.

"Justice:" and the article itself is called the "breast-plate of Judgment." Now, the goddess of Truth or Justice in Egypt was Thmei: and an Egyptian judge wore,* suspended round his neck by a gold chain, a figure of this goddess, studded with precious stones: and his way of pronouncing his decision was by touching the successful applicant with this figure. Moreover, Sir G. Wilkinson presents to us† an Egyptian breast-plate containing the figures of the Sun, (Ra) and Thmei,—“Light and Truth,” or “Justice;”—the Sun, Ra, being King among the gods, and the Urei,‡ the royal asps, being the symbols of majesty throughout the Egyptian system.

And such as these were the forms, such as these the visible and tangible media of communication with Jehovah which here took the place of that direct intercourse between God and his people which Moses had hoped to see established! He had brought them to this “Mount of God,” if not full of heart and hope, at least with a steady faith in their elevation to the simple patriarchal allegiance which had been the privilege of their fathers. In how different a mood he saw them depart! They came “bringing no vain oblation,” but the offering, he trusted, of obedient and hopeful hearts. Now, he was to see them,—from this mountain where we stood,—depart on their way to the Promised Land,—their backs bending under the burden of the sanctuary and sacred paraphernalia, which he well knew to have less holiness in them than one single aspiration to God,—one single emotion of love or hope

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, II. 26.

+ Ibid. V. 28.

‡ Suggested by Lord Prudhoe. Cited in Ancient Egyptians, II. 27, n.

for Man. Away they went,—by that opening to the right,—the tribes in their order, and “the mixed multitude” following;—all but their leader happier than when they arrived, because as much as possible of Egyptian usage had been brought into the midst of them. For the sake of this, they suspended for a time their cry to be led back to Egypt, and consented to look forward, in a fitful and vacillating way, to the Promised Land. Perhaps the heaviest heart among all that number was that of the Leader, who had found that even his brother could turn against him. But he was still full of purpose and of faith. The promises of the ancestral land before them were on his lips; and in his secret heart he rejoiced that every step removed them further from Egypt. Along that track we were now to go.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM SINAI TO AKABA.

WE were now about to set forth on what might be called the most romantic part of our travels. Many European travellers have been to Sinai, returning to Suez, or to Cairo: but few have seen Akaba; and yet fewer Petra. It will be remembered that Burckhardt, with all his qualifications for making his way in the East, and all his earnest desire to accomplish his objects, failed to reach Akaba, and merely passed through Petra, in haste and hazard, and under the pretence of being a Bedoueen, under a vow to sacrifice a goat to Aaron. Knowing this, and being aware that the few who had visited these places had believed themselves in great danger,—danger to liberty and life as well as property,—we scarcely expected, to the last moment, to be able to go to either place: and the contract with Sheikh Bishara was framed accordingly. It was as follows. Each camel, 150 piastres (1*l.* 10*s.*) from Cairo to Sinai, if we took the usual route to Suez. If we went by the southern route (which we did) 165 piastres per camel. If, on our arrival at Sinai, we found it probable that we could get to Petra from Akaba, Bishara was to take us on to Akaba for 100 piastres per camel. In case of hearing no favourable news at Sinai, Bishara was to take us to Nahle,

on the middle route towards Palestine, for 100 piastres per camel. In case of our not falling in with an escort at Nahle, Bishara was to take us on yet further.—In this contract, all expenses whatever for Bishara's camels and men were included.

At Sinai, we found a letter, intended for any travellers who might arrive, which seemed to open our way to our objects. It was from a gentleman with whom we had made some acquaintance at Cairo: and he wrote from Akaba, saying that the well-known Sheikh Hussein made no difficulty about taking on travellers at that time through Petra to Hebron: but that he would not declare his pecuniary terms. Having been told that our party was coming on, he would be prepared to negotiate with us on our arrival. Our way was thus open to Akaba, at least. We should see the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and look over upon the mountains of Eastern Arabia, and visit the Ezion-geber where Solomon built his ships for trade with Ophir, and whither our minds are continually brought in reading of the conflicts of the Idumæans and the Hebrews, for centuries after the settlement of the latter in Palestine. We were really going to Akaba, though, as Dr. Robinson observes,* "Shaw and Niebuhr only heard of Akaba; Seetzen and Burckhardt attempted in vain to reach it; and the first Frank who visited it personally in modern times, was Rüppell, in 1822."

Our route was not that taken by Burckhardt, Laborde, or Dr. Robinson. I suppose travellers always prefer their own route to any they read or hear of: and all

* *Biblical Researches*, I. 253.

these gentlemen may have seen something which they would pity us for missing: but I own I am sorry to think that they never saw Wade-el-Ain and Wadee Weteer. However, we had not need all go the same road. The more divergence, the better for the information of those at home.

We left the convent on the morning of the 10th of March, at ten o'clock, and travelled till three, when we encamped in a wild place among shivered rocks. By the middle of the next day, we had left the granite, and found ourselves among sandstone, red and white. As I had a rough-paced camel, I walked this morning fourteen miles, in excessive heat. When we came to heavy sand, at two o'clock, I was obliged to mount. The heat here was too much for our sociability. At luncheon, some of the party crowded under the scanty shade of a thin acacia, whose thorns, strewn the ground, made the resting-place uneasy enough. One gentleman might be seen crouching alone, with his luncheon, under an angle of the rock, where there was just shade enough to thrust his head into. Another lay on a shelf a few feet above the sand, with a red handkerchief over his head,—thus introducing “a nice bit of colour” into the landscape; while I sat apart, quietly bearing the sunshine for the sake of a breath of air from the wadee, and being spared the trouble of speaking. Our encampment was delightful, after this;—in a wide watercourse, among the most fantastic rocks of white sandstone, and surrounded by tufts of tamarisk and innumerable bushes of flowering white broom.

On the 11th, our own party were off some time before the rest: but after an hour's travelling through

deep sand, our guide found himself at fault among the fantastic scattered rocks; and we had to wait till the Sheikh and the rest of the party came up. They dropped into our recess from behind one group of rocks or another, till all were assembled; and then Bishara himself was not sure of the way. He ran hither and thither among the slopes, and at last directed us over shelves, and down steps, and through gullies, and in and out among the glaring rocks, so that our wonder was, not that he was perplexed about the way, but that he could ever find it. We now missed the pebbly and rocky tracks which had hitherto served us almost all the way from Cairo, and found how different a thing it is to travel through sand. But, about two o'clock, we turned up among granite mountains again, and found ourselves in a gorge, compared with whose summits, Sinai and Horeb appeared almost insignificant. Every winding disclosed something finer than we had yet met with; and at last we came upon a scene to which we remembered no parallel. We all knew Switzerland; and we all agreed that not even there had we seen anything so magnificent as this Wadde-el-Ain;—the Valley of the Spring. Sir Frederick Henniker calls some of the Arabian scenery, "the Alps stripped naked." No description could better convey what we now saw. The whole gorge answered to my young imagination of the sterner parts of Greece; and especially where a dribbling spring wetted the sands, and made small pools where fresh grass sprang, and tall slender rushes, and a few thick-leaved shrubs, and here and there a bushy palm. Deep shadows were flung across, and

blazing sunshine poured down between. And we had time to fix in our minds the features of the scene ; for the camels paced hither and thither, to drink at the pools which they made muddy for those behind. Presently, we proceeded more slowly still,—most willingly, for we felt we could hardly linger too long. As we turned to the right into Wadee Weteer, we came upon a scene which might almost be called verdant. The asphodel and other plants, which grew on perches and in crevices of the red rock, were of the liveliest green, while tamarisks spread their sprawling growth in all nooks and on many platforms. Not only did the camels stop to crop these tamarisks : their drivers were seen at every bush, and in the midst of every tree, gathering arms and laps full of twigs for their beasts. The white sand underfoot, the verdure skirting the mountains, and the precipitous rocks, of a rich red hue, rising so as to narrow the sky, and to lessen the glare to a pleasant light, filled us with a delight altogether new. We wound along this pass for about three miles, and then encamped in a spot, less superb than the closer parts of the gorge, but very fine. It was on a platform in a nook of the pass, where the wind came freely, and at night blew strong. We were guarded all round by solemn barren mountains, behind whose ridges the stars went down early. I lay on the sand to watch them, though warned of scorpions ; for the heat within the tent was not to be borne till night. I observed here the largest locusts I ever saw ;—two huge, hard, black locusts, each perched in a bush, and not moving while it was light enough to see them. Some of the company amused themselves with making

a bonfire at night, in spite of the wind, and kindly invited us to the fun; but I preferred the solemn steady starlight.

The 13th was a glorious day. We made a long journey, every step of which was beautiful. Before six we were on our way, proceeding along the gorge of Wadee Weteer till my eye was caught by a soft vision of I did not know what. A distance, a line of heavenly hues crossed the opening of the pass, so soft in contrast with the strong lights and forms of the foreground, as to make me doubt for a while whether what I saw was earth or sky. It was the range of eastern Arabian mountains, as was presently shown by the little angle of deep blue sea that came in between. We were coming down upon the Gulf of Akaba. The breeze blew cool upon our faces, and the whole company grew merry. To see both shores of this Gulf of Akaba, where the fleets of Solomon and Jehoshaphat used to ride; to be actually gazing upon the farther Arabian shore, gave us a kind of new sensation of where we were; a truth, says my journal here, "which our daily comfort rather blunts the sense of."—On the shore, the wind was strong; and we went behind a glaring yellow rock to lunch. Our noon-tide rest had now stretched out from twenty minutes to an hour, on days when we found good shade. Sometimes I could not keep awake for a single minute after alighting, but fell into a state more like stupor than sleep, however hungry I might be:—a consequence, I think, more of the excessive light than the heat; and more perhaps of the camel-riding than either. To-day, however, in the fresh wind, I was wide awake; and I vividly remember

the pleasant hour under the rock, with chibouques and conversation.

The remainder of the day's journey was easy,—trotting over hard tracks on the sea-beach for about three hours. Here we might push on, without troubling ourselves about the baggage and the rest of the caravan. We could not miss our way; and there was no danger from Bedouens, as far as we knew. So two of us rode forward, passed the baggage train, and decided on our resting place. It was where a palm sprang out of the sand, and some bushes growing near told of fresh water. Beside this palm, and close upon the sea, was our own tent pitched; and down I went, with Mrs. Y., to bathe, under a little thicket of bushes near our tent. There was nobody to threaten us with sharks: the sands were soft: the water was warm (73°): the blue sea, with its white ripple, was like a lake among the surrounding high shores; and the sunset light was gorgeous on the double range of opposite Arabian mountains. The Gulf was here about fourteen miles wide.

In the morning, we were eager to be off again along the shore; and before six, when the dawn was growing into daylight on the sheeny sea, three of us were trotting merrily ahead of the caravan. As I looked back from the first promontory which turned us into the sea, I saw the troop scattered along the beach, and the last baggage camels pacing out from among the bushes about our camp. Sometimes in the bays we had to go slowly over fields of sand; sometimes to cross the promontories by steep paths or shelves in the rocks; and oftener, to enter the water, guiding our camels as usual; for the water was as clear as the air.

At last, we were brought to a stop, where we agreed that there were two roads, if any. The promontory before us jutted out too far to make it prudent to take the water without guidance: and there was besides only a stony wadee which looked as if nobody ever had passed through it, or ever would. So we made our camels kneel, and waited on our saddles. Others who came up did the same, till we were a curious kneeling party. Bishara passed us at length, and led the way up the stony wadee. We little knew what we were entering upon: and if any one had told us that it was the pass to Wadee Negabad, the words would have conveyed to us no more than they probably now do to my readers.

The ascending wadee narrowed to a pass of steeper ascent; and the pass to a mere mountain road; and then, the road to a staircase: a zigzag staircase of steep, irregular steps, so completely without pause that the great anxiety of every body was to keep his camel going, because every one behind was in suspension,—hanging between two steps, so that any stoppage must be worse than inconvenient. Many would have been glad to dismount: but they must not stop, even for that moment. The way was also too narrow for alighting safely. One lady jumped off; and then was in a great agony because her camel resisted being pulled forward; and there was not room for her to pass behind, to drive it. The next in the string applied his stick to good purpose; so that we were relieved from our hanging attitude. During that minute, I could glance behind me; and most striking was the picture of the sandy and stony areas below, with the long-

drawn caravan winding far beneath and up the steep. Our position must have looked terrific to the hindmost. At the top, we found ourselves on a pinnacle ;—a mere point, whence the way down looked more threatening than that we had passed. I could not allow myself a single moment here ; for the camels were still tail to nose all the way down ; and in the same way must they descend the tremendous zigzag before me. Most of the gentlemen contrived to slip off here : but there was no room or time for me, in the precise spot I occupied, to do so : so I set myself firm in my stirrups, and determined to leave it to my camel how to accomplish the break-neck descent. Only two besides myself rode down the whole way ; and I believe we were all surprised that every one arrived at the bottom in safety. There were a few slips and falls ; but no harm done. The ridge of a camel is a great height from which to look down on, not only the steepest turns of sharp zigzag on the side of a precipice, but long slippery stone steps, in quick succession. I depended altogether upon my stirrups ; a pair hung short over the front peg of the saddle, which save the necessity of resting one's feet on the camel's neck in any steep descent, and are a great help in keeping one steady. I do not think such a pass as this could be accomplished without them.

In the dreary scene below us we found a shady place, which yet was dreadfully hot. We staid an hour, though Akaba was yet five hours off, and it was now half-past one. The baggage-camels and dragoman of our party had gone on while we rested ; so that we four must reach Akaba this evening, whether the rest of the caravan did so or not and in the state of wear-

ness and illness in which I was from the heat, this was rather formidable to think of. After four o'clock, however, the sun had so far declined as to become endurable. I took off my hat, and let the warm breeze blow in my face, and felt that I could very well reach Akaba. After passing the island of Graia, and before four o'clock, the rest of the company stopped, pitching their tents on the beach: and we four trotted on.—By the extraordinary kindness of some of our companions, a tent was offered to Mrs. Y. and me, if we would stop: but we declined it, thinking an encroachment which would have been bold anywhere, too bad in such a place as this.

Akaba was now in sight,—the fort and long line of palms, on the opposite shore, round the head of the Gulf. At five o'clock, it seemed rather further off than nearer; and the gentlemen began to think we could not hold out. Mr. E. pushed on, to overtake Alee and the baggage, and stop them, wherever they might happen to be.—Yet, fatigued as I was, I felt that evening ride to be delicious. How clear the light was,—showing us every object along the shore at the head of the gulf, as if, after sunset, the very dusk had been made transparent! There was Akaba, still and solitary!—there was the group of our camels, so minute that we could not see them move, but only barely glide: and there was Mr. E., distinguishable by his white hat, trotting fast in our service! And here were we three and a camel boy, a little group almost lost in the landscape, moving deliberately under the hills, with the clear waters undulating on our right hand, and the stars coming out over head.

Alee was so near Akaba when overtaken that it was useless to stop him : and therefore we found, when we arrived at seven o'clock, that our tents were pitched among those palms we had seen for so many hours. We had travelled above twelve hours between breakfast and dinner : but Mr. E. had seats, biscuits, and bottled porter ready for us ; and soon after eight we had dined, and were quite well.

Poor Burckhardt ! what a pity it is that he could not travel round the head of this Gulf as easily as we did ! The spot where we came out upon the shore after luncheon seems to have been that where he was turned back. Hostile Arabs lay between him and Akaba. There is something pathetic in his notice of this turning-point. " Under these circumstances, I reluctantly determined to retrace my steps, the next day, but, instead of proceeding by the shore, to turn off into the mountains, and return to the convent by a more western route.—Akaba was not far distant from the spot from whence we returned. Before sunset, I could distinguish a black line in the plain, where my sharp-sighted guides clearly saw the date-trees surrounding the castle, which bore N.E. 1 E. : it could not be more than five or six hours distant. Before us was a promontory called Ras Koreye " (the Graia of Laborde and the maps) " and behind this, as I was told, there is another, beyond which begins the plain of Akaba."*—" My guides told me that in the sea, opposite to the above-mentioned promontory of Ras Koreye, there is a small island. They affirmed that they saw it distinctly ; but I could not, for it was

* Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, pp. 508, 509.

already dusk when they pointed it out, and the next morning, a thick fog covered the Gulf.”*

He was no doubt looking too far. The island of Graia was lying close inshore, and very near; and its ruins must have caught his eye if he had not been looking out over the gulf. His guides told him that the infidels had put buildings upon the island, which made them call it “the Convent.” Laborde explored this island, crossing to it by a raft, which he and his companion, M. Linant, rowed with palm-branches for oars: and they planted the French flag on a rock, and thus took possession of a place which had been deserted since the fourteenth century. The Crusaders fortified it; and their walls remain. My note of its appearance on the 14th of last March is, “the island of Graia uprose brown from the blue waters;—two brown eminences, with brown fortifications upon them.”

On our arrival at the head of the Gulf, (I think, about an hour before reaching our tents,) we had fallen into the great Hadj route,—the broad trodden way by which the annual caravan proceeds to Mckkeh. As we rounded the head, of course we had the sea on our right hand: and on the left was the plain of Akaba,—the end of the great Wadce Araba which extends hither from the Dead Sea, and which is supposed to have been once the channel of the Jordan, in the days when it flowed uninterruptedly from its fountains in Anti-Libanus to discharge itself into this Gulf, before that convulsion which caused it to be lost in the Dead Sea. This plain looked very barren,—stretching in between approaching lines of mountains; and its soil is too salt,

* Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 511.

for two or three miles inland, to grow anything but a few stunted bushes.—In the neighbourhood of our tents, we observed a few inclosures ; but saw no houses that night. There were people in abundance, however, filling our little camp, which was considered so far from safe, in the absence of the rest of the caravan, that no less than eight guards were appointed for the night.—This was arranged with the Governor of Akaba and that important personage, Sheikh Hussein, on whom so much of our fate was to depend for some weeks to come. They came just when we ladies had dropped asleep while waiting for our late dinner, and thus we missed seeing them. They had pipes and coffee in the gentlemen's tent, where they gave an impression of being both grasping, and in one another's interest. How it turned out with regard to the Sheikh, we shall have abundant occasion to see.

In the morning of the 15th, we were up and in the sea before sunrise;—the clear, soft, warm sea ! How beautiful our place of encampment was, under the palms upon the shore ! While we were dressing, we heard that two of the gentlemen had arrived,—a deputation from the parties behind, that no time might be lost in pursuing the negociation with the Sheikh about going to Petra. When I came out of our tent, I found one of these gentlemen writing his journal on the shore,—after his long ride, and before breakfast ! There he sat on the shingle, book on knees, ink-horn before him, a fine example of energy !

The rest of the caravan might now be seen, a little moving knot of objects, on the opposite shore. Miss C.'s floating white veil told who they were. While we were

at breakfast in the open air, they came up, heated and hungry,—glad of any thing we could give them till their own meal could be prepared.

After breakfast, I wrote my journal in our tent; but found it so hot that when I had done, and wanted to read Laborde, I looked about for some shady place near, where I might have the advantage of any air that might be stirring. I found a very small shaded nook under a wall, close at hand; and there I carried camp-stool, book, and a double umbrella, to moderate the light. The camp-stool and my feet sank into the deep sand, which was yet cool: I lowered my umbrella, so as to shut out all objects, and there I sat,—my imagination being presently as much at Petra as my bodily frame was at Akaba. I was first startled by the flapping of something scarlet on the sand, under the edge of my umbrella: and amazed indeed I was at sight of what the umbrella had hidden from me. Within a yard of me sat the Council, smoking away in full and solemn negotiation.* The scarlet belonged to Sheikh Hussein himself; his robe was of scarlet cloth over a striped crimson and yellow tunic of satinet. He wore a prodigious shawl turban, lowering over his extraordinary face. At the first piercing look he fixed upon me, I felt that it was a face which would haunt me for life. He sat with his back against the wall, pouring out incessant clouds of smoke, and attended by his son, his pipe-bearer, and other vassals. Our dragoman was in waiting. In front of the Sheikh sat the deputation of the caravan,—three gentlemen on camp-stools, looking as excessively solemn as they could. As I found myself there, I thought I might as well stay; and very interesting

I found the scene.—One spectacle which I thought exceedingly pretty throughout the East was the earnestness and grace of the interpreters. Here was Alee,—sometimes in his eagerness, dropping on one knee, sometimes grasping the Sheikh's hand with his own left, while he laid down his meaning upon it with the right : at other times using the most vehement action, and then the most persuasive tones ;—now following the Sheikh's movements in unconscious imitation, and now listening with his whole soul to his employers' statements ;—it was a charming picture : and the negotiation this morning was of such importance that I saw the spectacle to perfection.

What passed at this time was as follows :—Out of the Sheikh's thousand camels, he could not collect and select the requisite number for our caravan in less than seven days : and for this we were, of course, unwilling to wait : so he and Bishara were to take us on with nearly our present set to Petra in three days. Others were to meet us there, for the transit of the rest of the Desert to Hebron, which would occupy about seven days from Petra. We were to stay a few days at Petra. The sum demanded was 20*l.* a head to Hebron, including every thing,—an insurance of ourselves and our property, baksheesh, and the tribute to the Sheikh at Petra. Two-thirds of the sum was to be paid at once, and the rest at Hebron. Alee told us that Hussein would by this make not more than 2*l.* or 3*l.* a head, as he had to pay five sheikhs to go with us, guards, and the subsistence of his camels and men. We were to set out the next morning.

We were warned that there might yet be a hitch :

and so it proved: and not one but many. I little thought ever to have witnessed the working of any passion in such perfection as I saw that of avarice in Sheikh Hussein, up to the last moment before our parting at Hebron. He cannot help himself now. To this passion he is a slave, every day, every hour. His life, his mind, his countenance are ravaged by it. The whole intensity of the Arab character,—an intensity which in others is divided among the objects and affections of their lives,—their families, their camels, their enemies, their religion and their desert wilds,—is in him concentrated upon gain; and a terrible spectacle it is.—Not to trouble the reader with all the changes which took place in the course of this day, when the old man returned repeatedly to the charge, to see what more he could get,—a circumstance which left us to the last uncertain whether we should reach Petra or not,—here is the contract as it finally stood.

Sheikh Hussein made himself answerable for our safety, and was to refund the value of any property which might be lost. For the whole journey to Hebron, except the tribute of 100 piastres (1*l.*) a-head to the Sheikh of Petra, Hussein was to have 1000 piastres (10*l.*) for each person, and 250 piastres (2*l.* 10*s.*) for each camel: the whole to be paid in advance, except the half of the camel money, which was to be paid at Hebron. To this the gentlemen adhered, through all the demands made by the Sheikh from day to day; by which demands he obtained nothing but our disrespect and compassion.

During this day, we looked about us as much as we could. We were struck here, as every where along the

shores of the Red Sea, with the vast quantity of shells thrown up in shoals along the beach,—from the minutest to some magnificent ones, as large as a man's head. Many varieties of little crabs were moving in all directions. Swarms of yellow locusts and handsome dragonflies flitted about in the sun: and little fish leaped out of the waters in great numbers.—There are no boats at Akaba; but men go out fishing on small rafts. To-day the sea was so calm that we saw them go as far out as the eye could well follow them.

In the afternoon we took a walk so far as to turn the flank of the palms. There were many inclosures which contained, besides thriving young palms, figs, pomegranates, and a prickly tree whose abundant fruit, now green, is said to be delicious when eaten fresh and ripe. We passed several water-holes and two shadoofs. There were many children abroad,—healthy and clean-looking, and of a free and upright carriage.

We walked up to the castle, and, to our surprise, found no difficulty in obtaining entrance. It is a stout fortress, built for the protection of the Pilgrims; with two cannon,—one on the wall, and one in the court. Well as the place looks outside,—really imposing,—we found it bare and foul within. The magazines are chambers of one story, built against the walls, all round the court; and their flat roofs support frailer dwellings, covered with palm leaves. Besides accommodating the little garrison, there is thus room for the merchandise which comes this way, and for its guardians: but we pitied those who have to take up even a temporary abode in a place so squalid and dirty. We were thankful that we had encamped outside.—From

the turret where the cannon is placed, we obtained a fine view, immediately after the sun had gone down :— the amphitheatre of mountains behind, with the area of sand between them and us ; the palm groves between the castle and the sea ;—the sea, like a golden lake, and the mountains retiring along its shores on either hand. With precisely the same natural features, how much quieter is this scene now than when Solomon's ship-building was going on !

Before we went to rest,—and it was late before we had the tent to ourselves,—the money was paid to the wide-awake Sheikh, the wearied gentlemen had put away their money-bags, with the hope that they should never again have so much ado about a bargain, and we had notice that we were to be off by eight, the next morning. So I made up my mind to bathe at five ;— my last sea-bath till we should come upon the Mediterranean at the end of our Eastern travel.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM AKABA TO PETRA.

WE bathed at five, and breakfasted early, as we had planned; but we were far from being off at eight, as the Sheikh had promised. There was so much disputing among the camel-drivers as to their shares, and so much unwillingness on the part of some to go among a strange tribe, for fear of robbery and loss of camels (though the Sheikh guaranteed to them indemnity, and two camels for every one they might lose) that those hours were consumed in wrangling and noise which we had hoped would have carried us up the first part of Wadde Araba before the heat of the day. The Sheikh, all in scarlet, sailed about, looking very dignified, and pouring out smoke like a chimney, wherever he moved among the palms. It was ten o'clock before we mounted; and we were almost hungry again by that time, and as weary with the hubbub of the last four hours as with a day's journey.

We left the inclosures of Akaba on our left hand, and the palms, and the exquisite blue sea, which narrowed to a line, and then was lost. After that, the way was dreary enough; more so than any region we had yet passed through:—a sandy valley, at least two miles wide, with high and sharp-cut mountains for

boundaries on either hand. There was something fine, however, in the infinite desert before us, lost in haze and distance, and sometimes rising in an immeasurable slope tufted with little tamarisks and thorny acacias.

It seemed to-day as if our desert freedom was all over. Hitherto, I had kept by myself as much as I pleased; and every true desert-traveller needs and chooses, if possible, to ride alone. With the sole precaution of never losing sight of the whole of the company, I had pushed forward, or lingered behind, or wandered away on either hand, at my own pleasure. But to-day we found, to the great concern of many of us, that we were to have this liberty no longer. We were drilled into order like so many recruits. If two or three of us were riding half a quarter of a mile on either hand, the Sheikh came or sent after us, to drive us back to the troop. This added much to the wearisomeness of the journey; and the more because no one of us, I rather think, believed that there really was any danger from foes: and we did not yet know Hussein well enough to consider that his sins of rapacity might be the cause of dangers which we need not otherwise apprehend.

Hussein, his son, a fine youth of sixteen, and the inferior sheikhs,—of whom, I think, there were three,—careered about us on pretty, active little horses;—or horses which looked small beside the camels. The sheikhs carried spears; and wore something red or green about their dress which gave them a distinguished appearance. The escort wore the true desert head-covering, which our own servants adopted now in travelling,—the handkerchief carried, not in the form

of a turban, but let down over the head, so that its four corners and fringes shade the face and neck, or float in the wind;—the handkerchief being bound on the head with a rope, or a skein of yarn. We had forty armed guards, independently of the camel drivers. Ten of them marched in front, and ten at a considerable distance on either hand;—on a rising ground, when there was any; and always on the look-out. The remaining ten were with us,—off duty. They were of the Alaoueen tribe:—a much grander tribe,—much richer in camels and herds,—than that of our good Bishara. But O! how much better did we like him, with his bright face and genial spirit, than the iron-souled great Hussein!—It was so hot to-day, and we had been so early tired, that we were not sorry when, at half-past three, Hussein leaped from his horse, and stuck his spear in the ground, as a signal that here we were to encamp.—It was in a bare and exposed place too, where our tents were pitched too close together to allow us any feeling of privacy.

We were now certainly on the track of the Hebrews, and should be for the greater part, or all of the rest of the way. It was by this wadee that they came down after being turned back into the wilderness from Kadesh, and then refused a passage through Edom. They left Aaron dead on Mount Hor, and then came down by this Wadee Araba to the sea, to get round to the east of Idumæa. More weary than ever must they have been of the Desert, after having been to the very borders of the Promised Land, and sent back thence all this weary way into the waste.

Having seen no one this day, we were permitted

rather more liberty on the next. The sheikhs still galloped about, scouring the sandhills, and darting hither and thither among the bushes when we wound along a gully, for the sake of its scraps of shade. I must say, we looked rather like a company of banditti at such times, creeping along, as if in hiding under the covert of the shrubs, between the sandhills,—a swarthy savage with his matchlock peeping up, every now and then, to see if all was clear to the horizon.—Once or twice in the day's ride, the Sheikh dismounted, and took possession of the best shade; and we found him, when we came up, enjoying his chibouque, with his son and attendants standing round him. This was a signal that we were to await the arrival of the last baggage camel: and I usually took advantage of the opportunity to walk on for an hour or two, though the heat was now so excessive that I was warned to cover my head as carefully as the Arabs do, and to wear a thick white cotton cap under my hat, during the noon hours. The gentlemen's broad-brimmed grey hats were covered with white; and they carried handkerchiefs in the crowns.

To-day we had experience of the Khamsin. When the heat had become so intolerable that all moved forward silently in dull patience,—some perhaps with a secret wonder whether they should ever breathe easily, or feel any muscular strength again,—a strong wind sprang up suddenly from the south. Though it was as hot as a blast from an oven, and carried clouds of sand with it, I must say I felt it a great relief. I was aware that the sensation of relief could not last; for the drying quality of this wind was extraordinary, and

immediately felt upon the skin. Still, the sensations under the evaporation were those of relief for the moment; and before they were over, we stopped, and could get under the shelter of our tents. The thirst which this wind caused was of course great; but we had plenty of water and oranges. I was surprised, after all I had read, to see how like thick fog an atmosphere full of sand can be. The sand was not coarse enough to be felt pattering upon the face, though it accumulated in the folds of one's dress: but it filled the air so as completely to veil the sunshine, and to hide altogether the western boundary of the wadee, and all before us. The eastern mountains, near whose base we were travelling, rose dim and ghostly through this dry hot haze. We were to have proceeded to Wadee Gharendel, where there is a small spring and a palm or two; but this wind caused us to halt sooner, for the advantage of a sheltering sandhill.

We passed Wadee Gharendel, the next morning, not more than half an hour from our resting-place. Its single palm, ugly in itself, looked well, standing as sentinel at the entrance of the narrow pass.

My camel was insufferable to-day: and I walked many miles, preferring thirst to having my back broken by my uneasy and uncertain camel. Since leaving Akaba, we had found our camels more and more troublesome from their obstinacy in stooping to every twig of tamarisk and acacia they could get a sight of. Instead of pacing steadily on, as in the peninsula, they would make a rush at every bush, right or left, and poke down their heads, every few minutes, to crop something,—each poke throwing the rider into a very

uneasy position. We did not yet know that our villanous Sheikh had brought no food for either camels or their drivers. He trusted to our compassion for the feeding of the men, and to the Desert shrubs for the subsistence of the beasts. On the second day, the lagging began.—And now, on the third, we were to have reached Petra in the afternoon: but on both evenings the Sheikh had stopped early, on some pretence; and so he did this night: the real cause being that the camels were too weak from hunger to go through a proper day's journey. We were not experienced enough yet, however, to discover all this; and it was a week more before we became fully aware of Hussein's iniquity. All I knew at present was that my camel went very uneasily, and that it was a less evil to walk when I could.

The only way in which I was permitted to walk was a rather strange one. I must not wander in the least: and the slowness of the baggage camels was intolerable, as they grew weaker. So I used to alight when in the rear of the caravan which came to extend over a space of from half a mile to a mile. I walked forward to the first bit of shade I could find in advance of the troop, and sat down till all had passed; and then walked forward again. This day we had left the sand, and were on hard ground, and amidst the glare and deep shadow of rocks. At two o'clock, Mount Hor became visible before us; and to the north-east, a sea of mountains, among which we were to find Petra.—Some of the party began to be much displeased with the Sheikh when he stopped us before three o'clock, instead of bringing us near to Petra. His excuse was

that we were entering among the mountains, and that he could not find a place for our encampment further on. He had now failed of his promise about distances every day: and it was clear that for some purpose he was protracting our journey.

Thus far, we had seen no living creature since leaving Akaba. This, which appeared wonderful when we expressly reminded one another of it, seemed natural enough at the time. Before our Desert travel was done, we found how much more striking and impressive it is to encounter men in the Desert, than to pass many days without seeing one.

We had not yet been distressed for want of water; though some of the party now began to look ruefully at what was offered us to drink. It was certainly rather reddish in colour, and a good deal too warm, though Abasis kindly took care to hang the skin which was next to come into use on the shady side of his camel.

On the morning of Friday, March 19th, we were six hours from Petra: and now the least sanguine of our party began to believe that we really should stand within that wonderful place. I was still possessed with the idea I always had of Petra;—the image I had formed from reading Laborde and others; that Wadee Mousa was a ravine,—a long and narrow ravine, which was flanked and surmounted by excavated rocks, and to which there was only one entrance. When, at night, I looked back upon my morning notion of Petra, it was like looking back from middle age to one's teens.

We were under weigh by six o'clock, and were pre-

sently among passes, of wild fantastic mountains. In a glen, we came upon some oleanders, springing vigorously, and some wild flowers. The ground was damp in patches, and there was dew upon the weeds. Never before did dewdrops look so bright to us. The rocks here were in towering masses, appearing distinct from each other, and most fantastic in their colours and surfaces. I should not have believed that any purely natural tinting could have been too bright for the eye of the lover of nature: but here, the colouring of the rocks is distressingly gaudy. The veining of the surface is singular. Every one cried out "Mahogany!" and the veining is like that of mahogany: but the colours of this veining are like nothing to be seen anywhere else:—scarlet, maroon, sky-blue, white, lilac, black, grey, and green! A stain of sky-blue and grey winds away in a ground of crimson; and a riband of scarlet and white in a ground of lilac; and so on. The stone is extremely friable, so that the mere rubbing with the finger end turns it into dust. The corrosion of the surface of the rocks by time and weather has so much the appearance of architectural intention, that it is at first difficult in Petra itself to distinguish the worn from the chiselled face of the precipices: and while approaching Petra, one seems to be perceiving the rudiments of the wonders of the place to come.

Alternating with these towering precipices, and at times surmounting them, are rounded eminences which look like downs, both from their forms and the greenish hue which is spread over them by their being strewn with the spines of the tamarisk. Tufted with blackish shrubs, they are not beautiful; but no characteristic of

this singular scenery is more distinctive than the contrast between the gaudy precipices and the pale mountains behind.—At the summit of the first steep and slippery pass, we looked abroad upon a noble view, of the billowy sea of mountains round about us, the partially sunned Desert stretching to the horizon, the sinuous and tufted wadees looking like desert paths among the sandhills and nearer rocks, and our camel train winding for a mile back among the pass and recesses below. We felt ourselves really now among the haunts of Esau and his tribe, and of the children of Ishmael, whose hand was against every one, as every one's hand was against them.—And when, a little further on, we stopped in a hollow of the hills to rest, it was strange to remember who came here in later days, and what an extraordinary depôt this was for the merchandise of the East, for a course of centuries. Up this pass came long trains of camels, laden with the silks, muslins, spices and ivory of India, and the pearls of Arabia, and amber, gold and apes from Abyssinia, and all the fine things that the luxury of Europe derived from the far East. These all came through Petra, and were lodged there for rest, and for no little traffic, as in a place wholly inaccessible by any foe. The eagle might pounce upon the kid among the areas of Petra; and the lightnings might dart down from the summits. But no human enemy could enter to steal, or arrow from human hand to destroy. Up this pass then had wound many a caravan laden with oriental wealth; and in this hollow had rested perhaps many a company in ambush, and no doubt many a baffled foe. Those single trees, perched on fantastic heights, were

some of them old enough to have been living in those days,—landmarks to the traveller, and signal stations to the desert warrior.

Then our path—our very narrow path,—lay over these whitish hills,—now up, now down; and then again we were slipping or jerking down slopes or steps of gaudy rock. About eleven o'clock, I saw the first excavation,—a square door-way in a pile of white rock on the right hand. Finding that we were not to arrive by the entrance which Laborde declares to be the only one,—the Sik,—I determined not to dismount, in order to ascertain whether there really was more than one entrance practicable for beasts of burden. I entered Petra first, (after the guide,) and can testify to the practicable character of this entrance, as I did not alight till we reached the platform above the water-course.

Petra might be said to begin from that first excavation. For nearly an hour longer we were descending the pass, seeing first, hints at façades, and then, more and more holes clearly artificial.—Now red poppies and scarlet anemones and wild oats began to show themselves in corners where there was a deposit of earth: yet the rocks became more and more wild and stupendous, while, wherever they presented a face, there were pediments and pilasters, and ranges of door-ways, and little flights of steps scattered over the slopes. A pair of eagles sprang out, and sailed over head, scared by the noise of the strangers; and little birds flew abroad from their holes, sprinkling their small shadows over the sunny precipices. Nothing gave me such an idea of the vastness of the scale of everything here as those

little birds and their shadows. What a life it must have been,—that of the men of old who gathered their comforts about them in such homes as these, and led their daily course among these streets and areas of Nature's making, where the echoes, still busy as ever, mingled the voices of men with the scream of the eagle and the gush of the torrent ! What a mixture of wild romance with the daily life of a city ! It was now like Jinnee land ; and it seemed as if men were too small ever to have lived here. Down we went, and still down, among new wonders, long after I had begun to feel that this far transcended all I had ever imagined. On the right hand now stood a column, standing alone among the ruins of many, while on the left were yet more portals in the precipice, so high up that it was inconceivable how they were ever reached. The longer we staid, and the more mountain temples we climbed to, the more I felt that the inhabitants, among their other peculiarities, must have been winged. At length, we came down upon the platform above the bed of the torrent, near which stands the only edifice in Petra.

This platform was sheltered on two sides by rocks ; and as my eye became accustomed to the confusion, I could make out, among the masses of building stones which lay between it and the empty watercourse below, the lines of five terraces, and, at last, the piers of many bridges. This platform was thickly grown over with some plant of the lily kind ;—we think, the red amaryllis, which must richly adorn the area when in blossom. Our servants pitched our tents here, in opposition to the Sheikh, who would have had us take up our abode in the caves, to save the expense of watchers.

We much preferred, however, the cleanliness and airiness of our tents, and the lily carpet which pushed its leaves under their curtains, and stretched under our beds.—The first thing Alee showed us was a scorpion, which he brought with the tongs from our tent,—a hideous, yellow, venomous-looking creature, about two inches long. Two more were found in another tent.

We were seriously desired not to move a step from our platform without guards and companions; and we had quite enough to look at for the present in the faces of the extraordinary precipices which walled us in. I spread my cloak on a rocky shelf, where I could quietly overlook the preparations for our abode of some days in this place which I had never hoped to reach. I did not laugh now when Mr. Y. said to me “Well, how do you like being at Petra?”

little birds and their shadows. What a life it must have been,—that of the men of old who gathered their comforts about them in such homes as these, and led their daily course among these streets and areas of Nature's making, where the echoes, still busy as ever, mingled the voices of men with the scream of the eagle and the gush of the torrent ! What a mixture of wild romance with the daily life of a city ! It was now like Jinnee land ; and it seemed as if men were too small ever to have lived here. Down we went, and still down, among new wonders, long after I had begun to feel that this far transcended all I had ever imagined. On the right hand now stood a column, standing alone among the ruins of many, while on the left were yet more portals in the precipice, so high up that it was inconceivable how they were ever reached. The longer we staid, and the more mountain temples we climbed to, the more I felt that the inhabitants, among their other peculiarities, must have been winged. At length, we came down upon the platform above the bed of the torrent, near which stands the only edifice in Petra.

This platform was sheltered on two sides by rocks ; and as my eye became accustomed to the confusion, I could make out, among the masses of building stones which lay between it and the empty watercourse below, the lines of five terraces, and, at last, the piers of many bridges. This platform was thickly grown over with some plant of the lily kind ;—we think, the red amaryllis, which must richly adorn the area when in blossom. Our servants pitched our tents here, in opposition to the Sheikh, who would have had us take up our abode in the caves, to save the expense of watchers.

We much preferred, however, the cleanliness and airiness of our tents, and the lily carpet which pushed its leaves under their curtains, and stretched under our beds.—The first thing Alee showed us was a scorpion, which he brought with the tongs from our tent,—a hideous, yellow, venomous-looking creature, about two inches long. Two more were found in another tent.

We were seriously desired not to move a step from our platform without guards and companions; and we had quite enough to look at for the present in the faces of the extraordinary precipices which walled us in. I spread my cloak on a rocky shelf, where I could quietly overlook the preparations for our abode of some days in this place which I had never hoped to reach. I did not laugh now when Mr. Y. said to me “Well, how do you like being at Petra?”

LONDON:

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

In Three Volumes, price 12s., cloth,

FOREST AND GAME LAW TALES.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

Second Edition, price 5s., cloth,

LIFE IN THE SICK-ROOM : ESSAYS

BY AN INVALID.

“ The character of the book is of the loftiest kind. The reader will not often find more variety of topic in the same space, more purity of sentiment, more elevation of thought, than in this little volume. The book should be purchased by all who are sick, for its congeniality with their state, and by all who are well, that when they become otherwise the remembrance of it may cheer them in their altered condition.”—*Athenæum*.

